

**H.R. 1442, TO AUTHORIZE THE
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
OF A VISITOR CENTER FOR
THE VIETNAM VETERANS
MEMORIAL**

LEGISLATIVE FIELD HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION,
AND PUBLIC LANDS

OF THE
COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

May 21, 2003 on the National Mall, Washington, D.C.

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**LEGISLATIVE FIELD HEARING ON H.R. 1442,
TO AUTHORIZE THE DESIGN AND CON-
STRUCTION OF A VISITOR CENTER FOR
THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL**

**Wednesday, May 21, 2003
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands
Committee on Resources
National Mall, Washington, DC**

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., on the Mall, Hon. George Radanovich [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Radanovich, Peterson, Gibbons, Christensen, Tom Udall, Cardoza, and Bordallo.

Also Present: Representatives Pombo and Hunter.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Good morning. The Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands will come to order. I want to welcome everybody to the first ever congressional hearing in the core memorial area of West Potomac Park and the National Mall. Thank you for being here. Sorry we couldn't do better with the weather, but thank God we have a tent.

Before I make my opening statement, I would like to thank the National Park Service, the National Park Police, and the House Sergeant at Arms for their help in making this historic hearing possible.

First, though, we will have a presentation of the colors presented by the U.S. Park Police.

[Colors presentation.]

Rev. COUGHLIN. As we gather here so close to the sacred wall that nobly bears the honored names of women and men who gave their lives in the Vietnam War, we are moved once again to mourn their loss with their comrades and families. Yet we stand strong and are invigorated by their witness of bravery and patriotism. And this we give credit to all the veterans in that memorable conflict.

Lord, our faces and the present life of America is mirrored on this commanding tablet. Let us never forget. Help us to deepen our wisdom because of its lessons and inspire a new generation of generous and committed Americans.

As we approach the Nation's Memorial Day, we remember all veterans of all wars who defend this country and stand for

freedom. Strengthen now our efforts of homeland security and fortify young men and women in military service. Change the hearts of people around the world that we might overcome all prejudice and negative thinking and be instruments in Your hands to build a world of peace and security. This we pray, for we seek your blessing now and always. Amen.

Mr. RADANOVICH. I want to recognize the Agnon Middle School from Beechwood, Ohio, the seventh grade class, who let us in the Pledge of Allegiance. And, also, I want to recognize Reverend Daniel Coughlin, the Chaplain for the House of Representatives, who, of course, led us in prayer. Thank you very much to all of you who participated in the ceremony.

Before I begin my testimony, it is—or allow you to begin your testimony, it is customary at congressional hearings, as is the custom, I would ask the witnesses to stand and take the oath, please. If you would please stand and raise your right hands?

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much. You may be seated, and we will begin the testimony. Let the record show that all those who have testified have answered in the affirmative.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. GEORGE P. RADANOVICH, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF
CALIFORNIA**

Mr. RADANOVICH. This morning, the Subcommittee will receive testimony on H.R. 1442, legislation sponsored by the Committee Chairman Richard Pombo, of California, which would authorize the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to design a construct a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Many in the audience may not be aware, but back in 1979, Congress authorized the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to raise the necessary funds to build a Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The fund met its goal, raising over \$8 million, and on November 13, 1982, the Wall was open to the public.

Today, over 4.4 million people annually visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the most visited Memorial in our Nation's capital. Some come to the Wall that heals to sketch the name of their fallen mother or father, brother or sister on a piece of paper, while others come for a solemn moment with a fallen comrade.

Whatever the reason, the magnificent Wall behind me has come to represent so much to so many who visit it, and I believe most would agree that it has also become the quietest place in our Nation's capital.

Today, 58,235 names are inscribed on the Memorial, and while the names send a strong statement to many, others who were not born or who were very young during the Vietnam era may today walk away from the Memorial with more questions than answers.

With that, I yield to the Chairman of the Resources Committee, my Chairman, Mr. Richard Pombo, for his opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Radanovich follows:]

**Statement of The Honorable George Radanovich, Chairman,
Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands**

Good Morning. The Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands will come to order. I want to welcome everyone to the first ever Congressional hearing in the core memorial area of West Potomac Park and the National Mall.

Before I make my opening statement, I would like to thank the National Park Service, the National Park Police and the House Sergeant at Arms for their help in making this historic hearing possible.

First, we will have the Presentation of the Colors presented by the U.S. Park Police [Wait for Presentation].

Now, we will have the Pledge of Allegiance, led by the Seventh Grade Class of the Agnon School from Beechwood, Ohio. Would everyone please stand.

Now, Reverend Daniel Coughlin, the Chaplin for the House of Representatives will lead us in prayer.

Thank you all for your participation in our opening ceremony.

This morning the Subcommittee will receive testimony on H.R. 1442, legislation sponsored by our Committee Chairman Richard Pombo of California, which would authorize the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to design and construct a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Many in the audience may not be aware but back in 1979 Congress authorized the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to raise the necessary funds to build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The Fund met its goal—raising over \$8 million, and on November 13, 1982, The Wall was opened to the public.

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With that, I yield to the Chairman of the Resources Committee, Mr. Pombo for his opening Statement.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. RICHARD W. POMBO, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF
CALIFORNIA**

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Shortly after becoming the Chairman of the Resources Committee, I was approached by a number of Vietnam veteran organizations asking for my help in making their long sought after vision of a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial a reality. This is a common-sense idea. I decided to introduce the legislation before us today because I believe too many visitors to this great Wall behind us walk away not truly knowing the impact the Vietnam War had on our country, the men and women who fought in Vietnam and the lives of those families who lost their mothers and fathers, sons and daughter.

While I was only a child when the war began, I was a teenager in 1975 when I watched on television as the last of our troops and hundreds of civilians were airlifted from the roof of our Embassy in Saigon. I remember a country at war with itself and no homecoming for those men and women who had spent months and years fighting in the most horrendous conditions for the freedom you and I enjoy today.

Simply put, I believe the Vietnam War represents more than 58,000-plus names on the Wall. Their stories deserve to be told, as

well as the thousands of other stories that were tied to the war and its long-term effects on our Nation.

I think the Vietnam Veterans Memorial should offer the visitor a more comprehensive understanding as to why America first got involved in Vietnam in the early 1950's and committed to the conflict until 1975. I believe I am correct when I say that the Vietnam War represents the country's longest military campaign. It spanned six Presidential administrations, involved over 3 million Americans in the Southeast Asia theater, and sacrificed the lives of 52,235 Americans.

Before the hearing, I stood at the Wall and read the inscription, which reads: "In honor of the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam War." The names of those who gave their lives and those who remain missing are inscribed in the order they were taken from us. I believe they deserve more.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I will yield back so that we may continue with the hearing.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pombo follows:]

**Statement of The Honorable Richard Pombo, Chairman,
Committee on Resources**

Thank You, Mr. Chairman

Shortly after becoming Chairman of the Resources Committee, I was approached by a number of Vietnam veteran organizations asking for my help in making their long sought-after vision of a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial a reality.

This is a common-sense idea. I decided to introduce the legislation before us today because I believe too many visitors to this great Wall behind us walk away not truly knowing the impact the Vietnam War had on our country, the men and women who fought in Vietnam, and the lives of those families who lost their mothers and fathers, sons and daughters.

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Simply put, I believe the Vietnam War represents more than 58,000-plus names on The Wall. Their stories deserve to be told as well as the thousands of other stories that were tied to the War and its long-term effects on our Nation.

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I believe they deserve more.

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I yield back my time.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Before turning time over to Mrs. Christensen, I would ask unanimous consent that members not on the Committee be permitted to sit on the dais for the hearing. Without objection, so ordered.

I now turn to the Ranking Member from the Virgin Islands, Mrs. Christensen, for any opening statement she may have.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN, A
DELEGATE IN CONGRESS FROM THE TERRITORY OF THE
VIRGIN ISLANDS**

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for calling this hearing right here on the Memorial grounds. And you have made history many times in my association with you on this Committee, and this is another one.

First, I want to take the opportunity to welcome the young people who have joined us and the veterans and the representatives of the veterans organizations, and to thank all of our distinguished witnesses for their time and effort to be here today. I know that you are all here because the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is very important to all of you, and I know we are all looking forward to hearing what the panelists before us have to say about the proposal to build the visitor center here.

Let me also say that while the logistics can be a bit complicated, allowing members to see the actual area on the National Mall that would be affected by this proposal is invaluable, and I am very happy that we are able to hold a meeting here.

Any potential changes to this Memorial must be considered very carefully. This Wall is an incredibly powerful tool for reconciliation and healing. It is also a permanent record of sacrifice and loss. Millions of Americans feel a deep personal connection to this Wall, and we are its stewards. We must consider this and any other proposals affecting memorials on the Mall carefully.

My own personal experience in coming here with my husband, a Vietnam War veteran, for his first time more than 30 years after his service was a very moving one. And I wonder if a visitor center nearby would not have taken away from that awesome, peaceful, uncluttered moment when you are just there with the Wall, and even the people around you disappear—just you and the Wall with all its deep meaning and poignant memories.

I am not sure I would want to change that, but I am willing to listen to those for whom the Memorial is really an up-front and very, very personal experience.

In this instance, a visitor center would allow the National Park Service and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to provide visitors to this Wall a context that might further their understanding of the war. For many of the younger visitors here, this list of more than 58,000 names inscribed on black granite is certainly moving, but their personal understanding of and connection to the events surrounding this conflict are limited. A small underground visitor center could become a powerful tool in expanding visitors' connection with this Memorial and with its subject matter.

Certainly there are technical details to be considered. How best to design and construct this proposed center so that it will not intrude upon this or any other memorial on the Mall, as well as how best to fund, staff, and maintain the center if it is built must all be explored. However, these issues can and will be resolved, and today's hearing will be very, very helpful in that process.

Again, I want to thank our witnesses here today, and we look forward to your invaluable input. And, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter the statement of the Ranking

Member of the full Committee, one of the original cosponsors, Congressman Nick Rahall, into the record.

Mr. RADANOVICH. There being no objection, so ordered.
[The prepared statement of Mr. Rahall follows:]

**Statement of The Honorable Nick J. Rahall II, Ranking Member,
Committee on Resources**

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 1442, sponsored by our Full Committee Chairman, Mr. Pombo, authorizes the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Fund, the organization that designed and built the Vietnam Memorial, to design and construct a Visitor Center for the Wall as well. As an original cosponsor of this measure, along with my friend Jack Murtha, I fully support this legislation and am pleased that you are holding this important hearing today.

While the Vietnam War was a difficult, divisive and bloody chapter in American history, the Memorial to those who served during that war has become a catalyst for reconciliation and healing.

At the time of its construction, many wondered if such a simple, stark memorial was appropriate and even those who fully supported Maya Lin's brilliant design could never have imagined the powerful effects this Wall would come to have.

Millions of visitors each year leave millions of heartfelt tributes at the wall but, more important, each visitor leaves having been touched forever by their visit.

However, as the war itself fades further into our history, more and more of the visitors to the Wall have no personal connection with Vietnam. We should encourage young people, born after the war, to visit the Wall and learn about the sacrifice involved in defending democracy. And we should continue to hope that these young people will have no personal experiences of war.

At the same time, however, these younger visitors must be provided some context for their visit. A small, underground visitor center at the Wall will allow people some understanding of the circumstances surrounding the Vietnam War and provide a glimpse of the intense emotions so many Americans still feel when Vietnam is mentioned.

In addition, this visitor center proposal is particularly appropriate given the vast collection of items left at the Wall, some of which could be displayed in this new facility.

The Wall memorializes the more than 58,000 men and women who, as President Lincoln said about a different group of soldiers, gave the "last full measure of devotion" for this nation.

But the Wall has always been about those who survived the war and those who seek to understand the war years later, as well. The addition of this visitor center will provide an important new tool in accomplishing each of these valuable missions.

I want to thank our witnesses for their time and effort to be here today and I look forward to continuing our efforts to see H.R. 1442 enacted.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mrs. Christensen.

Are there any others on the panel wishing to make an opening statement before we go to the witnesses? Ms. Bordallo?

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO, A
DELEGATE IN CONGRESS FROM THE TERRITORY OF GUAM**

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am representing the Territory of Guam. I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation and believe it is important for us to authorize the establishment of a visitor and interpretive center to complement the Memorial Wall.

This center will stand to educate generations of young Americans, and we must ensure that the war experience, the honor, the service, and the sacrifice of our veterans is remembered for generations to come.

Guam contributed in high numbers in the Vietnam War and endured the most military casualties of native sons per capita in the United States.

I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank the witnesses who have come here to testify today, and I look forward to their testimonies.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Ms. Bordallo.

Any other members wishing to make any statement? Mr. Udall?

STATEMENT OF THE HON. TOM UDALL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO

Mr. TOM UDALL. I am very interested in hearing the witnesses, so I am just going to be very brief.

I think that there are individuals that are here that have worked a long time to see this wall become a reality, and I applaud them for their efforts. I, too, as our Ranking Member here said, want to hear the proposals consider them carefully, and do everything we can within the structure that is applicable today to make this a reality.

So thank you to all of you for coming, and I would waive any further time so we can get to this distinguished panel of witnesses we have.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Udall.

Anybody else wish to make an opening statement? If not, we will go right to our panel. I want to thank the gentlemen for being here today to testify on this issue.

As is customary in hearings, we usually have a little clock here. Actually, it is not a clock. It is a set of lights, just like a traffic light. Green means go, yellow means speed up, and red means stop. So we are going to try to abide by the 5-minute rule, although I want to make sure that every information that is necessary to get into the record is had. So if you can abide by the clock, I won't gavel you down or anything, but I might remind you if you go quite far beyond.

And if you don't mind, I may interrupt some folks during the hearing because of the jets going overhead if it gets to be a little bit too loud and if I think that people aren't able to hear. I think we got a good mike system. I think we will be OK, but just in case, I want to let you know.

Joining us today is Mr. Robert Duvall, who is an actor, from Middleburg, Virginia; also Mr. Stanley Karnow, who is a Pulitzer Prize journalist from Potomac, Maryland; Mr. James Kimsey, founding CEO and Chairman Emeritus of America Online, from Washington, D.C.; and Mr. Peter Prichard, who is the President of the Freedom Forum in Arlington, Virginia.

Gentlemen, again, thank you very, very much. We will start with 5 minutes' testimony from each, and then we will open up the panel for questions by the members. So, Mr. Duvall, welcome very much, and thank you for being here. And if you would like to begin your testimony, we would be anxious to hear it.

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT DUVALL, ACTOR,
MIDDLEBURG, VIRGINIA**

Mr. DUVALL. Mr. Chairman and members of the House Resources Committee, I am honored to be here, and I am honored to show my support for a visitor center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. I am the son of a career naval officer. My father first went into the United States Naval Academy when he was just 16 years old. He was the youngest of his class, youngest captain in the Navy during World War II.

I learned love of my country from my father, and the love of country also made me a veteran of the United States Army. So love of country, where else can we see this love more vividly than at this place? Over 58,000 citizens have their names engraved here. Who is not moved by these names? Who is not moved by these heroes?

So let us pass this bill. America's youth will someday see the photographs of the brave soldiers who did their duty for our country in a privately funded visitor center. This may become the most profoundly memorable educational experience in Washington, D.C., as the experience of the center works in synergy with the Memorial.

This is the third time Congress has tried to pass this bill. The third time. Mr. Chairman, I salute you for your dedication to finally getting this job done.

There were those who two decades ago did not want this Memorial on the Mall, but the wisdom of the Congress prevailed, thankfully. Now we must complete the task. And as this Memorial has evolved from "The Wall That Heals" to "The Wall That Educates," America's youth must have the opportunity to learn patriotism and sacrifice at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Every decent American I know agrees with me when I say there is nothing to fear in the precedent of educating youth that will be set by this visitor center. Good education is never dangerous. Young Americans could and should have learned about patriotism and sacrifice at the Wall with a visitor center long ago. I especially thank the President of the United States and National Park Service Director Fran Mainella for support of this concept.

Actually, I had a great line from "Apocalypse Now," where I played Lieutenant Colonel Bill Kilgore, and the line was, I quote—it is not the one that you think it is, but "Some day this war is gonna end."

In a profound sense, the societal impact of that war is not over. The Vietnam War changed our country and has ongoing implications for all Americans. Yet here at this sacred site, those who took opposing views stand united in respect for the citizens whose names are engraved. And this is where we must have the visitor centers—right here at the Wall.

This is a historic day, a historic hearing at the site of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. A visitor center for America is closer to becoming a reality.

I was moved at looking at the young people here today. I think we all are, because future leaders of our country are here to petition Congress.

There is a visitor center at the Jefferson Memorial and the Lincoln Memorial, and one is planned for the Washington Monument as well.

Yet Vietnam veterans have to wage this struggle again and again for this noble cause. So I am pleased to be a part of it and again salute the wisdom of this Committee.

The youngsters here deserve to learn; they deserve to learn right here, not anywhere else but right here. This is what this hearing is about. It is about America's youth. They are here today petitioning Congress, so this hearing is about American democracy.

We are the land of the free and the home of the brave. We are also a land which is at war with terrorists who want to destroy our civilization, period. Some of these youngsters may have to serve as soldiers to defend our Nation in the future. Hopefully note.

I end today with a quote from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: "It is for us the living to be here dedicated to that cause for which they gave their last full measure of devotion—that we here rightly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this Nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

The spirits of the soldiers on this Memorial speak to us today with the sound of a thousand trumpets as they echo the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Open ye the gates that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."

So I urge all efforts to pass H.R. 1442. Let's bring about this visitor center. We owe it to those who are on this Memorial. We owe this to our fellow citizens. We owe it to those who are too young to know.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Duvall follows:]

Statement of Robert Duvall, Actor, Middleburg, Virginia

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Resources Committee.

I am honored to show my strong support for a Visitor Center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. I am the son of a career naval officer. He taught me love of country. That love of country also made me a veteran of the U.S. Army.

Love of country. Where else can we see this love so vividly than at this place? Over 58,000 citizens have their names engraved here. Who is not moved by these names, these heroes?

Let us pass this bill. America's youth will someday see the photographs of the brave soldiers who did their duty for our country in a privately funded Visitor Center. This just may become the most profoundly memorable educational experience in Washington, D.C. as the experience of the Center works in synergy with the Memorial.

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There is a visitor center at the Jefferson Memorial and the Lincoln Memorial. A visitor center is planned for the Washington Monument as well.

Yet Vietnam Veterans have to wage this struggle again and again for this noble cause! I am just so pleased to be a part of it and again salute the wisdom of this committee.

The youngsters here deserve to learn—they deserve to learn right here. This is what this hearing is about. It is about America's youth. They are here today petitioning Congress. This hearing is about America's youth and understanding our nation's democracy.

We are the land of the free and the home of the brave. We also are a land which is at war with terrorists who want to destroy our civilization. Some of these youngsters may have to serve as soldiers to defend our nation.

I end today with a quote from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address: "It is for us the living to be here dedicated to that cause for which they gave their last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

The spirits of the soldiers on this Memorial speak to us today with the sound of a thousand trumpets as they echo the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Open ye the gates that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."

I urge all efforts to pass H.R.1442. Let's bring about this Visitor Center. We owe it to those who are on this Memorial.

We owe this to our fellow citizens.

We owe it to those who are too young to know.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Duvall.

[Applause.]

Mr. RADANOVICH. As is customary, there is generally no sign of reaction to speaking in congressional hearings. I would like to remind the audience of that as we hear this testimony.

We are going to go right down the line here. Mr. Prichard, I want to welcome you to the Subcommittee hearing, and if you would like to begin your testimony, please do so.

**STATEMENT OF PETER S. PRICHARD, PRESIDENT,
THE FREEDOM FORUM, ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**

Mr. PRICHARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is an honor for me to be here today with other Vietnam veterans, with Members of Congress, and with Gold Star Mothers and friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, to speak in support of the proposed visitor center, which I believe is an excellent idea which fills a pressing need.

Although I am speaking strictly for myself today, in my professional life I am president of the Freedom Forum and the Newseum, the new interactive museum of news that will open its new facility at 6th and Pennsylvania in a few years. And I am also a former editor in chief of USA Today, so I bring the dual perspectives of a journalist and a museum educator to the subject.

Today, nearly 30 years after the Vietnam War ended, it is becoming harder to recall the intense turmoil and the bitter divisions

that war brought to the lives of Americans. If you will indulge me for a moment, I would like to take you back to the spring of 1967 and share a moment from my life with you.

I was 22 years old. I was teaching English literature to high school seniors in western Massachusetts. I had no desire to teach high school. I was teaching because under the arcane rules of the Selective Service System of the time, I could escape the draft. And my motivation, I must confess, was not exactly a service to my students.

I walked out to my mailbox in Amherst, Massachusetts, on that fine spring day and found two letters. The first was from the Peace Corps, accepting me as a volunteer and offering me a position teaching English on a small island in the Pacific. Visions of a tropical paradise danced in my head.

The second letter was from General Lewis B. Hershey. He wrote: Greetings. You must report to an induction center in Hartford, Connecticut. You have been drafted. I don't believe that General Hershey signed that letter personally.

Unsure of what to do, I called the Peace Corps and explained my dilemma. The woman in Washington was very nice, but firm. She said, "I am sorry, Mr. Prichard, but the Defense Department takes precedence in these cases."

So, despite fears for my safety and ambivalence about the cause, I reported for duty. I was one of the few Ivy League graduates to be drafted, which is another commentary on the unfairness of the Selective Service System of the time. I served 13 and a half months in Vietnam, most of it in a small town called Sadec in the Mekong Delta. Although, thank God, I was not shot at very often, I gained a lifelong respect for the courage and competence of the American soldier, no matter how controversial the cause, or how dirty and dangerous the duty. And although over time I grew to oppose the war and later publicly questioned the wisdom of our commitment, I learned the value of service to one's country, even in the most unpopular of wars. One can disagree with one's country, but still serve with respect and dedication when called.

Twelve years after I returned from Vietnam, I was a young editor at a startup newspaper, USA Today. It was Veterans Day 1982, and I read in the Washington Post that on that particular Saturday there would be a parade of Vietnam veterans marching down Constitution Avenue to dedicate Washington's newest memorial, that long black wall that had been so controversial to build.

The veterans who marched down Constitution that day in support of the Memorial were a rag-tag, long-haired bunch. They reminded me of the American rebels of 1776, that "rabble in arms" that secured our independence from the greatest superpower of that day.

I had grown up in a small Minnesota town near the Canadian border, Thief River Falls, and when the Minnesota contingent came marching by that day on Constitution Avenue, it was led by a high school friend of mine who had been wounded with the 25th Division. I had not seen him in many years. He was pushing his buddy in a wheelchair; they had both been blown up when their armored personnel carrier had been hit by rocket-propelled grenades.

Forsaking my young family, I jumped off the curb and joined the parade, marching along together with the other veterans, swept up in the joy and gratitude of all of the veterans. We finally felt that our service to our country was beginning to be recognized. We had fought and served and suffered in the most unpopular war in American history. More than 58,000 of us had died. And, finally, we felt some measure of thanks and appreciation and acknowledgment for our service, thanks to Jan Scruggs and all of the other determined veterans and people who got this Wall built.

And today, as many have said, this is the most popular Memorial in Washington.

But, as Chairman Pombo has observed, more than half of the visitors to this Memorial were born after the Vietnam War ended. Many—perhaps most—have little or no knowledge of why the war was fought, how we became involved, whether we won or lost or just fought to a draw, and what we learned from one of the most wrenching American experiences of the 20th century. And no museum in Washington deals with this subject in any depth.

What could be more appropriate to redress this gap in our knowledge and understanding than this visitor center? What better way could there be to teach our young people and young people around the world about some of our most precious ideals: the value of service to one's country, even for an unpopular cause; the freedom to speak out in a democracy, for or against any issue; the bravery of those who fought, even when they knew the American public was ambivalent or antagonistic; and, finally, the healing that is still needed, for those who lost loved one, for the veterans who suffered and were forever changed, and for the Nation to close the wounds that this war left on the American psyche.

What better place could there be for a visitor center than here at this sacred wall? Building it here will stimulate millions of Americans to learn more about the Vietnam War and the lessons it still teaches us. This is in the best tradition of our war memorials, which are built so that future generations will always remember, will never forget, the sacrifices that were made.

Almost 40 years ago, when I was a Specialist Four hoping to survive in Vietnam, I found in the PX a paperback book by the great French journalists, Bernard Fall. That book educated me about the roots of the conflict. After I read it, I finally understood something about how I—and the other half a million Americans on the ground then—had ended up in what many thought was a quagmire. I was grateful for that book because it brought me a measure of understanding. If by building a visitor center in this sacred space we can bring some similar measure of understanding to the millions of young people who visit this hallowed ground each year, our capital and our Nation will be better for it.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Prichard follows:]

Statement of Peter S. Prichard, President, The Freedom Forum

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is an honor for me to be here today with other Vietnam Veterans, with Gold Star Mothers and friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, to speak in support of the proposed Visitors Center, which I think is an excellent idea which fills a pressing need.

Although I am speaking strictly for myself today, in my professional life I am the president of the Freedom Forum and the Newseum, the interactive museum of news that will open its new facility at Sixth and Pennsylvania in a few years, just across the street from the National Art Gallery. I am also a former editor-in-chief of USA TODAY, so I bring the dual perspectives of a journalist and a museum educator to the subject that is before us today.

Today, nearly three decades after the Vietnam War ended, it is becoming harder to recall the intense turmoil and the bitter divisions the war brought to Americans' lives. If you would indulge me for a moment, I would like to take you back to the spring of 1967, and share a moment from my life with you. I was twenty-two years old, and I was teaching English to high school seniors in Western Massachusetts. I had no desire to teach school; I was teaching because under the arcane rules of the Selective Service System of the time, I could escape the draft. My motivation was not exactly a service to my students.

I walked out to my mailbox in Amherst, Massachusetts on that fine spring day and found two letters. The first was from the Peace Corps, accepting me as a volunteer and offering me a position teaching English on a small island in the Pacific. Visions of grass skirts danced in my head.

The second letter was from Lewis B. Hershey. He wrote: Greetings, you are to report to an induction center in Hartford, Connecticut. You have been drafted. I don't believe General Hershey signed the letter personally.

Unsure of what to do, I called the Peace Corps and explained my dilemma. The woman in Washington was very nice, but firm. She said, "I'm sorry, Mr. Prichard, but the Defense Department takes precedence in these cases."

So, despite fears for my own safety and deep ambivalence about the cause, I reported for duty. I was one of the few Ivy League graduates to be drafted. I served thirteen and a half months in Vietnam, most of it in a small town called Sadec in the Mekong Delta. Although, thank God, I was not shot at very much, I gained a lifelong respect for the courage and competence of the American soldier, no matter how controversial the cause, or how dirty and dangerous the duty. And although over time I grew to oppose the war, and later publicly questioned the wisdom of our commitment, I learned the value of service to one's country, even in the most unpopular of wars.

Twelve years after I returned from Vietnam, I was a young editor at a start-up newspaper called USA TODAY. It was Veterans Day, 1982, and I read in The Washington Post that on that Saturday there would be a parade of Vietnam Veterans marching down Constitution Avenue to dedicate Washington's newest memorial, that long black wall that had been so controversial to build.

The Veterans who marched that day in support of the Memorial were a rag-tag, long-haired bunch. They reminded me of the American rebels of 1776, that "rabble in arms" that secured our independence from the greatest superpower of that day.

I grew up in a small Minnesota town near the Canadian border called Thief River Falls, and when the Minnesota contingent came marching by on Constitution Avenue, it was led by a high school friend of mine who had been wounded with the 25th Division. He was pushing his buddy in a wheelchair; they had both been blown up when their armored personnel carrier had been hit by rocket propelled grenades.

Forsaking my young family, I jumped off the curb and joined the parade, marching along together with the other veterans, swept up in the joy and gratitude of all of the veterans. We finally felt that our service to our country was beginning to be recognized. We had fought and served and suffered in the most unpopular war in American history. More than fifty-eight thousand of us had died. And finally, we felt some measure of thanks and appreciation and acknowledgment for our service, thanks to Jan Scruggs and all of the other determined people who got this Wall built.

And today it is the most popular Memorial in Washington, with more than four million visitors a year.

But, as Chairman Pombo has observed, more than half of the visitors to this Memorial were born after the Vietnam War ended. Many—perhaps most—have little or no knowledge of why the war was fought, how we became involved, whether we won or lost or just fought to a draw, and what we learned from one of the most wrenching American experiences of the Twentieth Century. And no museum in Washington deals with this subject in any depth.

What could be more appropriate to redress this gap in our knowledge and understanding than this Visitors Center? What better way could there be to teach our young people, and young people around the world, about some of our most precious ideals:

- The value of service to one's country, even for an unpopular cause;
- The courage to speak out in a democracy, for or against any issue;

- The bravery of those who fought, even when they knew the American public was ambivalent or antagonistic;
- And finally, the healing that is still needed, for those who lost loved ones, for the veterans who suffered and were forever changed, and for the nation to close the wounds that this war left on the American psyche.

What better place could there be for a Visitors Center, than here at this sacred wall? Building it here will stimulate millions of Americans to learn more about the Vietnam War and the lessons it teaches us. This is in the best tradition of war memorials, which are built so that future generations will always remember, will never forget, the sacrifices that were made.

Almost forty years ago, when I was a Specialist Four hoping to survive in Vietnam, I found a paperback book in a PX by the great French journalist, Bernard Fall. That book educated me about the roots of the conflict. After I read it, I finally understood something about how I—and the other 550,000 Americans on the ground then—had ended up in what many thought was a quagmire. I was grateful for that book, because it brought me understanding. If, by building a Visitors Center in this sacred space we can bring some similar measure of understanding to the millions of young people who visit this hallowed ground each year, our capital and our nation will be the better for it.

Thank you very much for the privilege of testifying today.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Prichard, thank you very much. Appreciate your testimony.

Mr. James Kimsey, welcome to the Committee, and if you would like to begin your testimony as well, you are welcome to do so.

STATEMENT OF JAMES V. KIMSEY, FOUNDING CEO AND CHAIRMAN EMERITUS, AMERICA ONLINE, INC., WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. KIMSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As a Vietnam veteran, a graduate of West Point, and a native Washingtonian, I am honored to be part of these proceedings today. For more than 3 years, I have been actively involved with the efforts by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to place a visitor center at the Memorial.

I would like to state for the record that I fully support a visitor center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Currently I serve as Chairman of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Corporate Council, business leaders who represent many of the world's largest corporations and who all share the common bond of service in the Vietnam War. The Corporate Council works to move forward the Memorial Fund's mission of honoring, healing, and educating through several innovative outreach programs.

Just over 5 years ago, it was the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Corporate Council that brought forward the idea of expanding the mission of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to include the education about the impact of the Vietnam War. What resulted was a comprehensive curriculum kit featuring a teachers' guide, books, and other valuable resources. The educational program, known as "Echoes from the Wall," was sent free of charge to the Nation's 40,000 secondary schools.

Today, teachers and students throughout the U.S. are benefiting from the educational programs of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. But that good start cannot end in America's classrooms. It must continue when those students visit our Nation's capital. It must continue when they visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. This underground visitor center must be here on this site.

As the founding CEO of America Online, I have been an ardent supporter of technology and education, and through my foundation

I have been dedicated to helping bring a brighter future for and tapping into the vast potential of this area's youth. I sit on numerous boards and lend my support to many civic and charitable organizations.

Throughout this work, I have had the opportunity to speak with educators about challenges that they face in today's classrooms. I have listened carefully to their concerns. One of their biggest: making history relevant so our young people understand the principles that helped to build our country and make it the most powerful in the world.

A few years ago, we commissioned a survey about Vietnam War education in America's secondary schools. Vietnam, as you have heard, was the longest war in our Nation's history. It splintered this country unlike any other in modern history.

But students do not learn about Vietnam. In fact, the survey found that high school students are taught less about the Vietnam War than any other major American conflict.

Only one-third of students between the ages 12 and 17 is taught about the Vietnam War as opposed to nearly two-thirds who learn about the Revolutionary War and World War II. It also found that less than two-thirds of students between the ages of 12 and 17 know on which continent Vietnam is located. Thirteen percent of the students thought that Vietnam was located in Europe, and 3 percent of the respondents believed Vietnam was in North America.

Mr. Chairman, as we celebrate the Wall and all that it has accomplished, we realize there is more to be done. Our most important mission: educating our children about the war, our Nation's longest and most divisive conflict.

There are some who have referred to Vietnam veterans as America's forgotten veterans. I reject that. All you here today will have the power to make certain that those veterans and that war will not be forgotten.

We will teach our children the lessons we learned as soldiers and as a country, and we will accomplish two goals: first, we will educate our country's youth; and, second, we will continue the Wall's work at healing our Nation.

Many of our country's children know very little, if anything, about the Vietnam. There is a generational disconnect. We cannot let this happen, not as veterans, not as a Nation.

We were young men and women fighting in an unpopular war, the youngest armed forces the U.S. has ever sent into combat. So when we embark on our educational outreach to young people across the U.S., they will be able to understand that the Vietnam War was not some political battle of old men in a faraway land.

These were people almost their own age, faced with difficult choices and incredible challenges—challenges that they may have to face someday. They should be ready and we owe it to them to make sure they are.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I encourage you to support H.R. 1442 to ensure that our Nation's young people will have the opportunity to learn about service and sacrifice at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial for generations to come.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kimsey follows:]

**Statement of James V. Kimsey, Founding CEO and Chairman Emeritus,
America Online, Inc., Washington, D.C.**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Resources Committee as a Vietnam veteran, a 1962 Graduate of West Point and a native Washingtonian, I am honored to be part of these proceedings today. For more than three years, I have been actively involved with the efforts by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to place a Visitor Center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

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Mr. Chairman and Members of Committee, as we celebrate The Wall and all that it's accomplished, we realize there is more to be done. Our most important mission: Educating our children about the war—our nation's longest and most divisive conflict.

There are some who have referred to Vietnam veterans as America's Forgotten Veterans—I reject that. All you here today will have the power to make certain that those veterans and that war will not be forgotten.

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Many of our country's children know very little, if anything, about the Vietnam War. There's a generational disconnect. We cannot let this happen, not as veterans, not as a nation.

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These were people almost their own age, faced with difficult choices and incredible challenges; challenges they may have to face someday. They should be ready and we owe it to them to make sure they are.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I encourage you to support H.R.1442 (The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center Act) to ensure that our nation's young people will have the opportunity to learn about service and sacrifice at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial for generations to come.
Thank you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Kimsey.

Mr. Stanley Karnow, thank you very much for being here. Welcome to the Subcommittee.

**STATEMENT OF STANLEY KARNOW, PULITZER PRIZE
JOURNALIST, POTOMAC, MARYLAND**

Mr. KARNOW. It is certainly an honor to be invited to speak here. I am a grunt reporter, and I want to tell you that my span in Vietnam goes back a long way.

As a reporter, I made my first trip to Vietnam in the summer of 1959. I happened to be in Saigon working for Time magazine when I heard that two American military advisers had been killed at Bien Hoa, which was a camp, a military camp, about 25 miles north of Saigon. So I naturally drove up there, gathered the details, and wrote a piece for my magazine, which earned all of three paragraphs, which, of course, was all it deserved at the time. This was a pipsqueak incident in a faraway place that nobody had ever heard of.

Of course, looking back, it is hard to imagine, impossible to imagine that I was a witness to one of these moments of history. I have spent a lot of my time at historic moments that I didn't know were historic at the time. And I want to say that the two military advisers are the first two names on the Wall: Major Dale Buis and Master Sergeant Chester Ovnand. And, of course, as has been said, I could never have imagined that these were going to be at the head of more than 58,000 names on the Wall, which, of course, nobody had ever thought would exist at the time.

If I could just inject one more point, when we talk about the number of Americans who died in Vietnam—I know it is not within the purview of this—I want to remind people that something like 2 to 3 million Vietnamese also died in the war, and I am talking about Vietnamese on both sides. And I read in the paper this morning that a memorial is going up in Southern California to the South Vietnamese soldiers who died.

Well, I think a lot of this would have been forgotten if the Wall had not been built. The struggle, of course, was the most divisive war we fought since the Civil War, ripping the country apart and, has been said, returning veterans were criticized either for failing to make progress or criticized by critics of the war for committing atrocities of one sort or another. I think these were despicable accusations.

I have a lot of reservations about the war. That is another matter which is not for this discussion here. But whatever one thought about it, the veterans, the men who fought the war, the men and women who fought the war were not responsible for it. The responsibility lies with our political leaders and our military leaders.

And if I could just digress for an anecdote, I was on a panel the other day with a former member of Lyndon Johnson's administration who told me about all the mistakes and all the lies that they

told during the war. And he ended and said, "Well, I don't want to blame anybody," he said, "looking back." And I kind of lost my temper in this very sedate surrounding, the Council on Foreign Relations. I said, "What do you mean, you don't want to blame anybody? There are 58,000 dead and you don't want to blame anybody? What are we supposed to do? Just forget about it?"

At any rate, as you know, Robert McNamara wrote a book in which—a dismal book, in my opinion—in which he said we were wrong, terribly wrong. And, you know, Senator—what's his name?—from Georgia. Senator Cleland.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Max Cleland.

Mr. KARNOW. Max Cleland said, "McNamara should have called that book 'Sorry About That.'"

At any rate, the founders and patrons of the Wall, and Jan Scruggs in particular, have been involved in many projects that go beyond the Wall itself, and one of them, of course, is the Teaching Center, and I think it is vital to educate young people. I am interested to hear that not many know about the war, but I must say that I get phone calls every month or so from some high school student who wants me to write his term paper for him. And people ask me questions, and I find that there is a certain amount of interest in the war.

And I think, again, being the last hitter on this panel, I tend to—I think I may be repeating what has already been said. I think it is vital that people understand it so that we avoid terrible situations and tragedies like this again.

The Wall was intended to commemorate the dead, and I think it has succeeded admirably. And I think the center will transcend that function and become both educational and, I think, an instrument of good will and help to promote peace in a way by avoiding situations like Vietnam.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Karnow follows:]

**Statement of Stanley Karnow, Pulitzer-Prize Winner,
Author, *Vietnam: A History***

By chance I was in Saigon in July 1959 as a correspondent for Time when I heard that two U.S. military advisers had been killed at Bien Hoa, a South Vietnamese army camp about 25 miles north of the city. I quickly drove to the base through the torrid tropical heat, gathered the details and wrote a report of the incident. It earned only a couple of paragraphs in the magazine—all the minor event deserved.

But, looking back, it was far more significant than I imagined. I had witnessed the opening shot of a war that would drag on for the next 14 years—the longest in our history and our only defeat. Nor did I envision that the names of the slain men, Major Dale Buis and Master Sergeant Chester Ovnand, would ultimately head the roster of more than 58,000 others engraved on the poignant Memorial Wall in Washington.

Perhaps those heroes would be forgotten if The Wall had not been built. The struggle, the most divisive since the Civil War, ripped the country apart. Returning veterans were often castigated by supporters of the conflict for its failures, or vilified by its critics of committing atrocities. The accusations were despicable. The troops who fought and died in Vietnam were not responsible for the involvement in Southeast Asia. The architects of the venture were politicians and senior officials, some of whom have conceded that it was a mistake.

The Wall has dramatically changed public opinion. Since its construction, Americans of widely divergent views have come to the realization that the servicemen were fulfilling their duty. This reassessment is mirrored in the fact that the monument is the most visited in the nation's capital. So it stands as a vivid symbol of

both unity and redemption. Vietnam is behind us, but it reminds us of one of the most tragic experiences in our country's experience.

To their credit, its founders and patrons are now engaged in several ambitious projects that reach beyond the monument itself. One of the most important is the effort to educate young Americans on the war. Teachers have been provided with curriculums and other materials that will enable them to instruct their students, either directly or through the Internet. The response to the program has been overwhelmingly positive, and I am proud of the role I played in its formulation.

This, however, is just one part of the outreach. Today, so many of the visitors to the Memorial are far too young to recall the events of the Vietnam War themselves. A visitor center on the site of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial would go far in illustrating the human toll of this period in history. This visitor center would serve to create a context for the existence of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, presenting a historical background of the conflict and the subsequent construction of the Memorial. The names on The Wall represent not only a period in time that cannot be ignored, but tributes to individuals that will forever be caught in that era.

I closely observed the complex and astounding events that transpired throughout the Vietnam War. As an historian and journalist, I believe the visitor center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is unequivocally necessary in providing a proper educational experience for all visitors. With several million visitors to the Memorial each year, the potential to make an impact on these people is an opportunity that cannot go untapped. The effort is well worth ensuring that each visitor walks away with a better understanding of the Memorial and our nation's history for generations to come.

The Wall was originally intended to commemorate the dead, and it has succeeded admirably. But with the visitor center here, on this very site, it will transcend that function to become an instrument of goodwill and that elusive dream—peace on earth.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Karnow. I appreciate that very much.

Now it comes time on the Committee where members may ask questions. I am going to lead off with one. I have the privilege of representing Yosemite National Park in California. And I got to tell you, you can't hiccup in that park without an environmental impact statement and upsetting thousands of people whenever you propose to do anything in Yosemite. And the Mall is very similar to that. It is beloved certainly by all people in the United States, but when you begin to discuss development on the Mall, it always raises controversy. That was my first thought when the issue of a visitor center for the Vietnam Memorial came up.

And it sounds like all of you gentlemen have been involved in this for a number of years. Can you give me a sense of—you know, there is a difference as a visitor center that looks like a couple of double-wide mobile homes that are sitting on top of the ground as opposed to something that may be underground. And I have heard the issue of underground. But can you speak at all to what might have been some preliminary designs over the years and what it might look like and also speak to the issue of development on the Mall?

You may want to respond by demonstrating the need for the visitor center, although I think it was fairly well established in your testimony. I think the issue is development on the Mall and how something like this might be accomplished in an unobtrusive way. And I would ask that to the panel in general, if anybody in particular wants to respond to it.

Mr. KARNOW. I am not very good on architecture. I was thinking one kind of model that might be interesting is if you have been in Paris, in the courtyard of the Louvre, there is that pyramid that

was designed by I.M. Pei. To some people it is controversial. But what is interesting is you go downstairs, and there is an underground place which is absolutely marvelous.

If you took the pyramid away, you could still have a way down there and so forth. But down there you find all sorts of educational things. And I think talking about doing it underground I think ought not to offend people who are concerned with what the landscape is going to look like.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Very good.

Mr. KIMSEY. Let me just add, rather than us going into long explanations here, we do have an architect here in Jan Scruggs, who is going to cover this in part of his testimony. But we have had a couple of preliminary designs that caused some agitation, and as Stanley correctly points out, this is an underground facility we are talking about. We do have some architectural renderings, and it should not cause anybody to be upset because it is belowground and it is a natural adjunct to the Wall, of course, which is aboveground.

So I think any detailed questions that anybody has about what it is going to look like and how it will affect the aesthetics of the Mall, we are prepared, I think, to give you some detail on that.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much.

All right. I recognize the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands, Mrs. Christensen, for any questions she might have.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I guess that pretty much answers my first question. It is not a question of an aboveground versus an underground. It is pretty well decided underground. OK.

Was consideration given to doing it away from the Memorial itself?

Mr. KIMSEY. It has been suggested that it be away from the Memorial, which I believe is counterintuitive. We believe it is a natural adjunct to have it collocated with the Wall. It is important that the many busloads of kids who come to see the Memorial get a broader perspective of the context of the war visually.

We believe this will be a benefit to teachers. As they give some precis on what the Vietnam War is all about in 10 minutes or less, that it will help the whole educational process, which is why many teachers bring their students to Washington, D.C., and the Wall is, as you know, the most visited monument in the city.

Mr. PRICHARD. I think speaking from the museum perspective, it is very important that the educational experience be adjacent to the object that you are looking at. That is when the teaching moment occurs. That is when you have the greatest opportunity to reach the people you are trying to reach. And I think it would really be a mistake to move it very far away from the Mall because people wouldn't go in numbers to it. It ought to be next to it or close by.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Anybody else?

Mr. DUVAL. One, the Wall is the impact, and then you go downstairs, it is another impact. So there are two instances of impact that they need to be adjacent, I think, because it is an immediate thing you can't separate, really.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I just had one other question. Thank you for those answers.

No Federal funds are supposed to be used in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance. Could any of you speak to the outlook for fundraising? How much needs to be raised? And how optimistic are you that that is going to be successful?

Mr. KIMSEY. Anybody that has had any experience with Jan Scruggs knows, as that Wall testifies, he is nothing if he is not indefatigable and persistent. He has got numbers and estimates and so forth, but it is true that there is no intention to use public funds to build this, and there is no doubt in my mind that Jan would be able to raise the money to build it.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mrs. Christensen.

I now recognize the Chairman of the Resources Committee, Mr. Pombo.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I thank the panel for your testimony. I think as I sat here and listened to you talk about your experiences and your desire to help in building this visitor center, I think it stirred the emotions in all of us. And as I was sitting here listening, I was thinking that the thing about this Wall, about the Memorial, the thing that we all love the most about it and hate the most about it is the same thing, and that is the emotions that it stirs up in all of us.

There is not a huge amount of controversy in Congress right now about the need to do something like this. And I think that you can tell by the line of questioning that the question is whether or not to put it here and what the impact is going to be on the rest of the Mall and the rest of the memorials and the monuments that are built here.

That is what we have to fight again. Since we started talking about this, since the legislation was introduced, none of my colleagues has told me that there is not a reason to do this. But they do question here, you know, where to do it, how to do it, what is going to look like, and I think the job that we have and that you have is just to educate members and to work with them and to answer their questions about what the impact is going to be on the site and how that is all going to fit together. I think that is going to be our biggest challenge that is ahead of us in trying to move forward.

I don't really have any questions for you. I think you guys did a fantastic job of presenting your side of this and your opinion. I just look forward to working with all of you in the future so that we can hopefully see this done in a timely fashion and without a huge amount of controversy through the Congress. So thank you all very much.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Chairman Pombo.

I now recognize Mr. Dennis Cardoza from the Central Valley of California. Dennis?

Mr. CARDOZA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have a question for this panel, but I do want to say that I had the pleasure of having dinner with several of them last night, and their dedication and commitment to this project is just very special. And I salute you all for your work and for your efforts, and I look forward to

working with you as you move forward and make this a reality. I am honored to serve with you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Cardoza.

I recognize Mr. Peterson from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PETERSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank this panel for your leadership, your vision. For me, the Vietnam War was very real because my next youngest brother went there, served for 14 months, and his name is Bruce. And I vividly remember those 14 months of waiting and hoping and praying that the letters he sent us and the tapes he sent us wouldn't be our only memories, that Bruce would come back.

I live in a small town of 986 people, and I also remember Danny Bennett, who lived across the street from me, who I was very fond of. And I remember the young Wells boy who I was very fond of. They went to Vietnam about the same time my brother did, and neither of those returned. And I still see the sadness in the eyes of their families, and they were just nice kids. They were kids. They were just out of high school. And they gave their entire life for us.

And so the Vietnam War has been very personal to me, and I guess we don't realize that if you don't have that sort of happening, it is not personalized to many and it is certainly not personalized to those who have come after us and weren't around when that was there.

I guess I would say that there are a lot of lessons that were learned from the Vietnam War. I think as we watch this administration as it came into some involvements, they didn't make some of the mistakes that were made in Vietnam. Because when we decide to have a conflict, we win, we get it over with. We don't do it in stages. We don't do it in degrees. We don't decide whether we should turn it over. When we make a decision to fight, we win.

And if we don't remember history, we have the likeliness to repeat it. And I think it is vital to this country to understand the intricacies of the Vietnam War, the mistakes that were made there so that we don't repeat them.

And I just want to commend each and every one of your for your leadership. I mean that sincerely. This is history that has to be personalized for all Americans, and I guess I just challenge you. How do we personalize it? It will be forever personal to me and my family. I have vivid memories that will never fade in my mind as long as I am alive, and I will teach that to my grandchildren and children. But I think it is vital that all of America understand the difficult time that the Vietnam War was in this country. But the lives that were given, you know, brightest and best young people who went and never came back, and we mustn't forget them and we must not forget the message that they gave to us and that we learned from that war.

And so I just encourage you to continue with your creativity of how we personalize this for all Americans so we never forget.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Peterson.

Jim, did you have any questions?

Mr. GIBBONS. No, but I would just like to make a few comments.

Mr. RADANOVICH. The gentleman from Nevada, Mr. Gibbons.

Mr. GIBBONS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Sitting over here on this side as a Republican with the Democrats tells you that we are all in this together. This is a bipartisan effort, a non-partisan effort on behalf of this Committee, to recognize the service of those people who served in that time. And as a veteran of the Vietnam War myself, I can say that we can show no greater love, no greater respect than to recognize the service of those individuals who served their country and served their country to the ultimate sacrifice in that war.

I am one of the original cosponsors on this bill, and I am really glad that we are here and we are here today in what appears to be a very similar day to the rainy season in that part of the world that our young men and women served in and the difficulties that they encountered. This is something that I think everybody in this country would support, encourage, and enjoy once we have completed our goal here of this visitor center.

So I want to thank the witnesses who have appeared before us today and give them our greatest admiration for coming out in this day to help us with this bill. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Gibbons.

Ms. Bordallo, did you have any questions of the panel?

Ms. BORDALLO. No, thank you, Mr. Chairman. But I couldn't help but listen to all of the witnesses here this morning. They are such a distinguished panel, and they are all from varied backgrounds. And yet they all had the same thoughts and are together in support of this Memorial and this visitor center. And I think it is wonderful that we have brought them all together in support, and I am looking forward to hearing the other panels that we have this morning.

Again, I would like to reiterate that I am also a cosponsor of this bill. Thank you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Ms. Bordallo.

We are honored to be joined by the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Mr. Duncan Hunter, from California, another Californian. Duncan, welcome to the Committee. If you have any questions, please feel free.

Mr. HUNTER. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for letting me come down and put in my 2 cents' worth. And thanks for having the hearing, and, Mr. Pombo, thank you for letting me know about it and trying to make sure I got down here.

Let me just offer my experience with respect to this type of a project and some thoughts that I have about it. You know, we had an exhibit in the Smithsonian on World War II, and it was designed by one of the executives in the Smithsonian, and the effect of it, which got some Members of Congress on the prod, the message in that exhibition, it was about the Enola Gay and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And the thrust of the message in that exhibit was that the Americans were very cruel people.

I remember part of the text that was written originally, proposed for that exhibit, was that the Americans did with low-level bombing in Germany and Japan things that even Adolf Hitler wouldn't do with respect to hitting centers of population.

The thrust of the message was that we were pretty rotten people, and a number of us met with the Smithsonian and we ended up being able to change the direction of that exhibit. I don't know how many folks here are familiar with that, but the message to me was what you exhibit carries a message. And so with respect to having a visitor center, I think visitor centers are darn good if they carry the right message. And I think one message that the American people learned by having all of these reporters embedded in the operation in Iraq was that GIs are good people. They had never seen that before, at least in modern times, and certainly never to the degree that was made possible by all of this real-time camera work that was coming back to the American audience that was fixated on that operation. But they saw that GIs were good people, that they cared about the non-combatants, that they were careful, that they had compassion, that they served our country well and honorably.

And, you know, I thought about that when that operation was over, and I had initially been against, incidentally, embedding news media with the troops and had commented on it and written to the Secretary because I thought it would distract people from doing their job. But it turned out to be a wonderful thing because it gave the real picture of the American GI to the American people.

Now, I contrasted that with what was written or what was shown about Vietnam with respect to movies, TV series, and having watched the last movie that I saw about Vietnam, and one of the few that I thought that was good, "We Were Soldiers," with Hal Moore, was a movie that reflected the real goodness of the American GIs. And I thought before that, "The Green Berets" did the same thing, a movie made by John Wayne, I think in 1966 or 1967.

In between, you had a number of movies that reflected Americans as being people that couldn't wait to get to the next village to burn it, which was not true, not accurate; people who took out enormous anger and psychiatric problems on the villagers of Vietnam, which was not true; and an image that was totally false. That image was created by folks in Hollywood, most of whom had never seen Vietnam, but who viewed Vietnam through the prism of their own political perspectives.

So I just wanted to say, Mr. Chairman, that what is shown in this exhibit is very important, and I am all for this exhibit if it shows the honor and the goodness of American GIs, and, I think, Mr. Chairman—and I speak for myself—the honor of the cause. The only time when Vietnam had any freedom, any modicum of freedom—and if anybody thinks that they have got a modicum of freedom today, please go on over and take a look—was when the Americans were there.

And I looked at the rules. I was reading the rules again the other night, the rules that were laid down by Washington, where our fighter pilots and bomber pilots were admonished not to hit targets because civilians were there. I remember as a platoon leader in Vietnam being given the order through headquarters that you can't bring artillery on that base in the Sui Kai Valley because there might be people nearby, even within a thousand meters, even within a kilometer of that particular location.

And so, Mr. Chairman, I fully endorse the idea of having a visitor center. I think it is good. But I think that message has to be an accurate message. And if it is a message which is aberrated through the prism of people who didn't like the United States activity there and want to make an editorial with respect to it by modifying whatever is displayed in this center or who somehow came to the conclusion that the GIs who were over there on the whole and as a group weren't outstanding Americans, then I don't want to support it because I think that is one of the great disservices that we did to our folks who came back. And if you watched those young GIs and the reflections on them that were so good through the American news media who showed what they were really doing in real time, I had to kind of reflect, you know, those are the kids of the guys who were in Vietnam. And you know something? The guys who were in Vietnam were just as good. They weren't there with "Full Metal Jacket." They weren't there with "Apocalypse Now" and all this other stuff of looking for the next village to burn or looking for the next villager to beat up. On the whole, they were outstanding Americans. And the story of that honor and determination is just now beginning to be told.

So this monument or this visitor center can be a tool in that accurate telling of what kind of people these folks were, or it can continue what is now beginning to die out, especially in the wake of the Iraq operation, but this distorted view of the character of the folks who served in Vietnam.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman. Don't put me down as undecided.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that.

Before I let you gentlemen go, can you give me an idea—and this might be more appropriate for the next panel, but are we within view of where it is thought the visitor center might be?

Mr. KIMSEY. I think the next panel—Jan will show you exactly where it is going to be, and I have been sitting here the whole time this testimony is going on watching platoons of kids circle that Wall, and I am sure they would all be clustered in that underground visitor center right now.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Getting educated.

Gentlemen, I want to thank you very much for being here as witnesses and your testimony today. I really appreciate it. And with that we will move on to the next panel. Thank you very much.

Mr. RADANOVICH. If everybody will sit down, we will begin with our next panel. Joining us is Mr. Dennis Cullinan, Legislative Director for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Washington, D.C.; Mr. Rick Jones, the Legislative Director of AMVETS, Lanham, Maryland; Dorothy Oxendine, the National President of the American Gold Star Mothers, Incorporated, from Washington, D.C.; and also Jan Scruggs, who is the Founder and President to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund in Washington, D.C.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for being here. Welcome to the Subcommittee. And, Mr. Scruggs, if you would like to begin your testimony, we will work 5 minutes each all the way down the line and then open up the panel for questions.

STATEMENT OF JAN CRAIG SCRUGGS, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. SCRUGGS. Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin especially now by recognizing young people, those who will be served by this patriotic visitor center, from the Agnon School in Ohio and from Osborne School in Manassas, Virginia. I believe they have some signs they want to hold up.

Mr. RADANOVICH. I think they disappeared on us.

[Laughter.]

Mr. SCRUGGS. That is what happens when—oh, there they go. Well, you missed it by a few minutes, but they had a bunch of signs to hold up.

Maybe to continue a little bit of levity before we get into the serious issues at hand, you may be just sort of interested in the legislative history of the visitor center bill, which was supposed to pass Congress. It was on the unanimous consent calendar of the U.S. Senate October 27 of the year 2000. One Senator pulled it off. It was then inserted in a supplemental appropriations bill December of 2000. The same Senator's staff took it out of the appropriations bill. It was next placed on the unanimous consent calendar May 23rd of the year 2001. Another Senator took it off the unanimous consent calendar who wanted hearings. We did have hearings. And last year, this last Memorial Day, we had had the hearings. It was on the unanimous consent calendar. Yet another Senator—we always had 99 votes, but one Senator took it off and kept his hold on the legislation until it ended. And about a month ago, the efforts of a number of Senators, very serious legislators, attempted to put it into a supplemental appropriations bill. Once again we had 99 people ready to pass the bill but one who stopped it.

It is an honor to be here. Others will be speaking of the very compelling case for the visitor center to serve the public. Therefore, I will turn my testimony to other issues which I think are of great interest and significance to you. I last testified in front of this Committee March 2000 on the issue of a plaque honoring veterans who died prematurely due to their military service. We really expressed reservations about the precedent of adding new things to the Memorial. But we promised this Committee that if this bill passed, we would hire prominent architects and get the job done, this unfunded mandate.

I will turn at this time to my first exhibit, Exhibit 1 and 1-A in your packet and on those signs. This is the actual plaque that will be placed here at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It would be close to the size of that. It will be placed near the statue. There was an earlier design, absolutely terrible, amazingly turned in by the National Park Service, and it was rejected by all parties. We hired the very finest architects available, including men who designed Constitution Gardens, and they did the appropriate siting, appropriate plaque. All we are waiting for is a construction permit and a final budget from the American Battle Monuments Commission.

The Senate, on June 3rd—by the way, that concludes my discussion of that issue—will be considering S. 296. This is legislation calls for adding new names to the Memorial, literally more names

than will fit on the Memorial itself. We don't think this is a good idea, obviously, but this legislation and the plaque legislation and future legislation are metaphors for the desire of people to be recognized here: scout dog handlers, CIA agents, Red Cross workers and others. And this is yet another reason why the visitor center must be built, to save the site from future memorialization. We can recognize them in the visitor center in some way.

A new lighting system for the Wall, by the way, has been designed. We have received all approvals. The lighting scheme will cost approximately \$350,000 to install, paid for by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. We have already paid about \$75,000. I note this because this is an example of our 20 years of partnership with the National Park Service working on very important issues.

At this time, we have for the past year paid a private electrical contractors, Power Solutions, a company here in Washington, to maintain the lights at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. They come each week. They change the gaskets. They change the light bulbs, transformers. They recently replaced some transformers until we can get the new lighting system in place.

We built this Memorial without any money from the U.S. Government. We will build this visitor center without any money from the U.S. Government as well. We take pride in that. We take pride in the fact that we think we are saving the taxpayers a little bit of money here.

We are very honored as well to provide advice to the World Trade Center Memorial design competition, which is now underway, is being modeled after our design competition. Exhibit 2 is a letter showing the appreciation of the Office of the Mayor of New York for our work. We have done work as well on the Oklahoma City Memorial, the National Police Officers Memorial, and have given advice as well to Mr. Robert Dole with the World War II Memorial.

We do appreciate the support of the Bush administration for the visitor center. Exhibit 3 is a letter from National Park Service Director Fran Mainella, who points out our 20 years of cooperation and expresses her support for the underground visitor center.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am informed that we have surprise testimony today, shocking testimony to me, from Mr. P. Daniel Smith, representing the National Park Service. He will testify that the letter, the representations of support for the visitor center are null and void, and his testimony, which I would love an opportunity to rebut in person, will come out against this.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Scruggs, if you could wrap up, please, you are beyond the 5 minutes.

Mr. SCRUGGS. OK. Let me just go through the exhibits real quick, if I may.

Exhibit 5 is a soda stand, which is right here next to—

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Scruggs, actually, if you want to wait, we can ask you questions after you are done.

Mr. SCRUGGS. OK.

Mr. RADANOVICH. I think that would probably be the best way to do it.

Mr. SCRUGGS. All right.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Since the weather is bad out here.

Mr. SCRUGGS. All right.

Mr. RADANOVICH. I appreciate that.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Scruggs follows:]

**Statement of Jan Craig Scruggs, Esq., Founder and President,
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund**

It is a distinct honor to be at Washington's most visited Memorial—a most compelling and logical place to discuss the reasons for H.R. 1442 and to address the issue in its entirety.

A Visitor Center will transform the Memorial into a profound learning experience for America's youth and others who desire the optional experience of the Center. Exhibits such as photos of those who are on The Wall, with skilled educators on hand, will engage them. There will be memorable displays of both the Vietnam War and of historic events that have taken place at the most visited Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Young people will gain a better understanding of a Memorial that is now older than they are. Further, the Center will help them to gain a better appreciation for their visits to the other memorials they will see during their time in Washington. These memorials all honor service to our great nation, service that has kept our country free.

I will let others speak of the compelling case for the Visitor Center here to serve the public. My remarks will address another significant matter—architectural excellence.

I last testified before this committee in March 2000 on the issue of PL 106-214 creating a plaque honoring veterans who have died prematurely due to their service. We expressed reservations about the precedent, but gave our support for the bill with the proviso that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund put together a design team to assure the highest standards of architectural excellence be placed into the project.

We did just that. Exhibits 1-A and 1-B are drawings of the design by architects JC Cummings, George Dickey and Henry Arnold. These architects were paid by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to obtain this striking design. Our architects obtained approval from all the relevant agencies. We look forward to its dedication. We simply are awaiting a construction permit. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund will put into place the funding, if needed, to complete this task.

Let me also point out that the Senate is considering S.296. A Hearing will consider this bill on June 3, 2003. The bill calls for adding new names to the Memorial—more names than can fit. This legislation, and the Plaque legislation, are metaphors for others desiring a presence at the site of The Wall.

This phenomenon is yet another reason for the Visitor Center where different groups—including CIA agents, Red Cross Workers and those who are the subject of S.296 can be recognized. A brilliant scheme of lighting for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has been designed and we have received all approvals. It was the last issue that the respected Fine Arts Chairman J. Carter Brown was personally involved with. We are merely awaiting a construction permit. The lighting scheme will cost about \$350,000 to install and will be paid for by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. We have already given over \$75,000 to the National Park Service to help them pay their contractor. I note this as an example of our 20 years of cooperation with the National Park Service in addressing the needs here at The Wall. Until the new lighting system has been installed, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund will pay lighting specialists, Power Solutions, to maintain the lights on a weekly basis. Every week since Spring 2002, our electricians visit The Wall to make sure that each and every light is functioning properly. We have been paying for this ongoing maintenance for over a year.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is honored to have been selected to provide advice to the planned World Trade Center Memorial. I am proud to say that their design competition is modeled precisely after the competition for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Again, this exemplifies our dedication and reputation for architectural excellence. Exhibit 2 is a letter expressing appreciation for our efforts with the World Trade Center Memorial. We also have provided advice to the Oklahoma City Memorial, the National Law Officers Memorial and to the World War II Memorial as well.

I am honored to have the support of the Bush Administration for the Visitor Center. In a letter I received in February 2002 (Exhibit 3), National Park Service Director Fran Mainella, whose late husband was a Vietnam veteran, wrote: "For 20 years we have worked together with you to support your efforts to increase visitor

awareness and understanding of the war and its national significance and we look forward to working with you in the future. We are very supportive of the concept to develop an underground facility to accomplish a continuation of these efforts..."

I now call to your attention Exhibit 4. This shows a huge corrugated aluminum building in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial. How could something like this be on our nation's Mall?

Exhibit 5 is a soda stand—about 200 yards from where we sit today. The rusting roof is unsightly. Yet this structure is on the Mall. These photos were taken at 10:00 a.m. on May 9, 2003.

Exhibit 6 is a tourmobile stand—unused sitting in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial.

Exhibits 7, 8, 9 and 10 are vending areas—which have achieved a permanent status at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. They stay in place 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Exhibit 11 is a legal opinion showing how their rights as demonstrators can be protected, while allowing the National Park Service to require each vendor stand to leave at the end of the day.

Exhibit 12 shows the plan for a visitor center at the Washington Monument. This impacts in a significant manner historic sightlines of the Mall. The glass area over the Mall also will impact pedestrian traffic. I enter this exhibit into the record as an example of what is acceptable and enthusiastically endorsed by the National Park Service.

Exhibit 13 illustrates the Mall area and the Structures therein near the Lincoln, Korean and Vietnam Veterans Memorials. These drawings are done as close to scale as possible to show what is acceptable on the Mall. This provides context to illustrate the minimal impact of the Visitor Center.

Exhibits 14, 15 and 16 show the actual Visitor Center as envisioned in operation—with people being educated.

As you can plainly see the Visitor Center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is diametrically opposed to the low standards of the exhibits you have just reviewed. Nor will it impact the historic sightlines like the structure planned for the Washington Monument. The Center will be beautiful—as should every structure on the Mall. The underground facility will be 10,000 square feet and will provide a profound educational experience for visitors who desire this optional experience—especially young Americans.

Of course, there will be an aboveground component to allow ingress and egress of the visitors. Architect William Lecky who brought about the Korean and Vietnam Veterans Memorials is enthusiastic to begin work. With the use of earth tone colors and proper landscaping, there will be minimal impact—unlike the structure in the historic vista of the Washington Monument. This minimal impact will be far exceeded by the educational impact for those like these youngsters here today. Again I call your attention to Exhibit 13 which shows the scale of structures in existence today.

Just as we built the Memorial with private funding, so too, shall we do so for the Visitor Center. We also will maintain the center to spare the government any financial expense. A 20-year lease is in the legislation to be reviewed at 7-year intervals. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund will staff and maintain the Center pursuant to a memorandum of understanding with the Secretary of the Interior with whom we will share it for joint purposes including agreed upon uses for National Park Service staff. Examples of this arrangement and cooperation between Federal agencies and the private sector abound. In the Lincoln Memorial—near his statue—is a bookstore. Ford's Theater has a museum and has plays that are shown to the public almost daily. Go to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial to see a large bookstore/visitor center—a truly integral component of the visitor experience—yet of minimal educational value due to its commercial nature.

For your consideration we have enclosed an independent survey (Exhibit 17) showing the overwhelming support for the Visitor Center by the American public. As Exhibit 18 we have also enclosed *Echoes From The Wall*, a curriculum package sent to each of America's high schools and middle schools by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. The Visitor Center is an extension of our mission to the young people who will one day lead our great nation.

Let us not forget the profound importance of today's hearing. We must reach out to America's youth from a place where they can be visually, intellectually and emotionally engaged. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is such a unique place. Your decision to allow this long delayed Visitor Center will go a long way toward this goal, a goal that veterans' groups, educators, journalists and the American public strongly supports.

I end my remarks today by pointing out that this effort has gone on for three years. This bill was ready for passage in October 2000, but was taken off the Unanimous Consent Calendar by one Senator. In May 2001, the bill was again on the

Unanimous Consent Calendar. Former Oklahoma Congressman J.C. Watts, Jr. awaited the bill—again the Legislation was removed from the Unanimous Consent Calendar. For Memorial Day 2003 again Congressman Watts awaited Senate passage. Again the bill was not allowed to come to the Floor for a vote. Despite months of efforts by Senators Chuck Hagel (R-NE), John Warner (R-VA), John McCain (R-AZ), John Kerry (D-MA), Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) and others, the Legislation failed to come to a vote. Thousands of individual Americans, educators, school kids, prominent CEOs and respected military leaders petitioned Congress—to no avail.

We learned a great deal. One profound lesson was to begin this effort in the House of Representatives. We are grateful to the Members of this Committee and their staff. Chairman Pombo looked at the facts surrounding the Visitor Center. He decided that the time had come to allow democracy and the will of the people to prevail. My thanks to him and to Congressman Rahall for making this day come to pass.

I thank you, our Vietnam veterans thank you and our nation's young people thank you.

[NOTE: All exhibits have been retained in the Committee's official files.]

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mrs. Dorothy Oxendine, welcome to the Subcommittee, and you may begin your testimony. And we look forward to hearing from you.

STATEMENT OF DOROTHY M. OXENDINE, NATIONAL PRESIDENT, AMERICAN GOLD STAR MOTHERS, INC., WASHINGTON, D.C.

Ms. OXENDINE. Mr. Chairman, Congressman Rahall, and members of the Committee, it is an honor to be here. This historic hearing at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is noteworthy and important. I am Dorothy Oxendine, national president of the American Gold Star Mothers—mothers who lost their sons in all wars, including Vietnam.

We meet today at a sacred place—a place where veterans and family members come to remember and, often, to mourn. This is a place where love is shown—love for those lost in Vietnam.

Patriotic men and women answered the call there, just as they did at Normandy Beach, at Yorktown, and at Gettysburg. In a profound sense, this is a resting place for those who did not return. They are together here.

Etched row upon row they serve our Nation still today. They serve to remind Americans of the price of freedom. And Americans are moved here. I am a Christian. I take solace in the words: "No greater love has any man than to lay down his life for his friends."

I am moved by the words of Major General David Grange. He wrote these eloquent words about his visits to the Wall: "I whisper with tears in my eyes to the names on the Wall, 'Thanks, you that have fallen, you made a difference then...and now.'"

They do make a difference now. And that is why we are here today.

So let us move to the issue of a visitor center. The Memorial is obviously very powerful. Yet if the Memorial is to do its job, it must reach out to America's youth. And that is why we need to see the visitor center at the Memorial. This hearing is about the future, the future of the Memorial as an educational device.

Inside of the visitor center will be photographs—photographs of those enshrined here. I can picture it right now: a group of school kids in the center. They look at the photos of young Americans

nearly their age. When they see these photographs, they will journey to the Wall. And the Wall will really have an impact, a memorable impact.

Willie Oxendine III is upon the Wall. Willie, my son, gave his life on May 30, 1968. I will live long enough to see his photograph in the visitor center.

While there will not be a Willie Oxendine IV, Willie will live on by inspiring young Americans. They will see his photograph. They will be moved. We hope they will be stirred to learn more about the Vietnam War and leave with a greater interest in American history.

We are today mindful of the past. Yet we keep an eye toward the future. Today we express our commitment to our Nation's youth and the message of patriotism and sacrifice that will be part of the visitor center.

We share your commitment as is evidenced by this hearing today.

We salute the wisdom of the Committee and look forward to speedy passage of H.R. 1442.

Gentlemen, thank you for hearing my testimony today.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Oxendine follows:]

**Statement of Dorothy Oxendine, National President,
American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. It is an honor to be here. This historic Hearing at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is noteworthy and important. I am Dorothy Oxendine, National President of the American Gold Star Mothers—mothers who lost their sons in all wars including Vietnam.

We meet today at a sacred place—a place where veterans and family members come to remember and, often, to mourn. This is a place where love is shown—love for those lost in Vietnam.

Patriotic men and women answered the call there—just as they did at Normandy Beach, at Yorktown and at Gettysburg. In a profound sense this is a resting place for those who did not return—they are together here.

Etched row upon row they serve our nation still today. They serve to remind Americans of the price of freedom. And Americans are moved here. I am a Christian. I take solace in the words: "No greater love has any man than to lay down his life for his friends."

I am moved by the words of Major General David Grange. He wrote these eloquent words about his visits to The Wall: "I whisper with tears in my eyes to the names on The Wall, 'Thanks, you that have fallen, you made a difference then...and now.'"

They do make a difference now. And that is why we are here today.

So let us move to the issue of the Visitor Center. The Memorial is obviously very powerful. Yet if the Memorial is to do its job, it must reach out to America's youth. And that is why we need to see the Visitor Center at the Memorial. This hearing is about the future. The future of this Memorial as an educational tool.

Inside of the Visitor Center will be photographs. Photographs of those enshrined here. I can picture it right now. A group of school kids is in the Center. They look at the photos of young Americans nearly their age. When they see these photographs they will journey to The Wall. And The Wall will really have an impact—a memorable impact.

Willie Oxendine III is upon this Wall. Willie, my son, gave his life on May 30, 1968. I will live long enough to see his photograph in this Visitor Center.

While there will not be a Willie Oxendine IV, Willie will live on by inspiring young Americans. They will see his photograph. They will be moved. We hope they will be stirred to learn more about the Vietnam War and leave with a greater interest in American history.

We are today mindful of the past. Yet we keep an eye toward the future. Today we express our commitment to our Nation's youth and the message of patriotism and sacrifice that will be a part of this Visitor Center.

We share your commitment as is evidenced by this Hearing today.

We salute the wisdom of the Committee and look forward to speedy passage of H.R.1442.

Gentlemen, thank you for hearing my testimony today.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much, Mrs. Oxendine.

Mr. Rick Jones, welcome to the Subcommittee. You may begin your testimony, please.

**STATEMENT OF RICHARD "RICK" JONES, AMVETS NATIONAL
LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR, LANHAM, MARYLAND**

Mr. JONES. Chairman Radanovich, Chairman Pombo, Ranking Member Christensen, members of the Subcommittee, it is a pleasure to be here at this marvelous site with so many friends of veterans to present our views on this matter. On behalf of Commander Bill Kilgore, thank you.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial presents a host of emotions from pride of service to sadness of loss. On this monument are the names of grandfathers, fathers, spouses, acquaintances, and friends engraved into the black granite. Each one deserves to be listed. Our Nation honors them at this site.

Today, AMVETS reaffirms its commitment to adding a visitor center to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. We have supported construction of a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial for nearly 6 years, when delegates of our 1997 convention in Orlando, Florida, approved a national resolution to establish a place on this site to help people gain a better understanding of the Memorial.

For many of us here today, the War in Vietnam was a key event in our lives, a touchstone that has shaped who and what we have become as adults. However, for those of younger generations and generations yet born, the events and people that encompass the Vietnam War are merely history, the stuff of textbooks.

AMVETS believes that adding a visitor center to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial will create a richer, more profound experience for visitors, especially young people. And in large part, it will help further pay homage to those special Americans who the Nation records as true patriots on the Wall behind you.

Mr. Chairman, many sacrifices have been made. Lives have been lost in the name of duty, honor, and country. And a visitor center can help make that wall a bridge to commemorate and never forget their lives.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present our testimony to your panel on H.R. 1442. This bill will help design and construct a visitor center at the Wall, and we appreciate your consideration and commitment to serving our Nation's veterans and their families, and we look forward to passage of this important bill.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Jones follows:]

Statement of Richard "Rick" Jones, AMVETS National Legislative Director

Chairman Radanovich, Ranking Member Christensen and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of National Commander W.G. "Bill" Kilgore and the nationwide membership of AMVETS (American Veterans), I thank you for the opportunity to present testimony to the Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands on H.R. 1442, a bill to design and construct a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans

Memorial. My name is Rick Jones and I serve as the AMVETS National Legislative Director.

Mr. Chairman, AMVETS has been a leader since 1944 in helping to preserve the freedoms secured by America's Armed Forces. Today, our organization, composed of a large number of Vietnam veterans, continues its proud tradition, providing, not only support for veterans and the active military in procuring their earned entitlements, but also an array of community services that enhance the quality of life for this nation's citizens.

AMVETS strongly supports this legislation. We firmly believe that the development of this center will greatly enhance the experience of those who come to this memorial.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a source of a host of emotions from pride of service to sadness of loss. It is one of the most loved and frequently visited memorials in Washington, D.C., and it means so much to all those who visit to see the name of their grandfather, father, spouse, acquaintance or friend engraved into the black granite. Here alongside 58,235 other heroes whose names are etched on the Wall, these brave men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice are not forgotten.

As you know, only the names of veterans killed during the Vietnam War or who subsequently died from combat-related injuries can be on the Wall. Relatives, friends or others submit names to the Defense Department. It verifies the information, then tells the National Park Service and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. The nonprofit organization, which built the Wall, pays to add the names.

And, each one deserves to be listed. Our Nation honors them at this site on our majestic National Mall. As we look around ourselves today, we are surrounded by monuments and symbols of our freedom so many have fought to protect. These structures honor those who have made our nation what it is today. By their service and endeavor, those so honored have helped establish a nation that continues to live up to its creed and face challenges to freedom of the present and future.

Today, AMVETS reaffirms its commitment to adding a visitor center to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. We have supported construction of a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial for nearly six years, when delegates to our 1997 convention in Orlando, Florida, approved a national resolution to establish a place on this site to help people gain a better understanding of the Memorial.

For 21 years, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has stood in quiet tribute to those brave individuals who offered the ultimate sacrifice for freedom so long ago. For many of us gathered here today, the war in Vietnam was the key event in our lives, a touchstone that has shaped who and what we have become as adults. However, for those of younger generations and generations yet born, the events and people that encompass the "Vietnam War" are merely history, the stuff of textbooks.

AMVETS believes that adding a visitor center to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial will create a richer, more profound experience for visitors, especially young people. This center will afford visitors a place to offer written reactions to the memorial and thereby establish a historical archive available to future visitors. The center will offer space to store and display the many and varied items placed in remembrance at the memorial and provide a computer database of those honored on the memorial. And in large part, it will help pay homage to these special Americans who the nation records as true patriots.

AMVETS believes the cause and purpose of the fighting man and woman in Vietnam was no different than that fought for by those brave Americans who currently serve or have served in America's other conflicts and wars. The 3.4 million Americans who served in the Southeast Asia Theater and the 58,235 memorialized on this Wall fought for freedom and each other, our nation must never forget their loyalty and valor. The burdens and struggles endured by these brave men and women, both during and after the battle, must be taught to our children so they can understand what the Vietnam War was and develop a strong respect for those who served.

Mr. Chairman, just as the places called Yorktowne, Gettysburg and Normandy have been woven into our nation's historical fabric, so must the sacrifices offered at Ia Drang Valley, Khe Sanh, and Hamburger Hill. Many sacrificed their lives in the name of duty, honor and country and the visitor center can help make the Wall a bridge to commemorate and never forget their lives.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present testimony to your panel on H.R. 1442, a bill to design and construct a visitor center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. We appreciate your consideration and commitment to serving our nation's veterans and their families, and we look forward to passage of this important project.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Jones. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Dennis Cullinan, welcome to the Subcommittee. Please begin.

STATEMENT OF DENNIS M. CULLINAN, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. CULLINAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee. On behalf of the 2.6 million men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our Ladies Auxiliary, I am pleased to testify here today in support of H.R. 1442, legislation to authorize the design and construction of a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, or the Wall, has stood since its dedication in 1982 as a national symbol of the service and sacrifice of those who paid the ultimate price in defending our democratic way of life in Vietnam. More than this, it has come to recognize and to honor the courage and patriotism of all of the veterans of that war as well as all of those who have served this Nation in uniform and stood in harm's way to protect our precious liberty. In commemorating these fallen heroes of Vietnam, it tangibly venerates the veterans of all wars—past, present, and future.

Among the 4.4 million individuals who visit the Wall annually, countless reunions and instances of mental and spiritual healing have taken place. It has become the locus for reflection and inspiration for veterans and non-veterans alike. In this way, it has gone beyond its purely symbolic role and become a place where the lessons of history are considered and, indeed, taught on a daily basis.

This memorial offers young and old alike the opportunity to learn the lessons of the Vietnam War and to develop a deeper awareness and understanding of the true meaning of both sacrifice in the service of others and patriotism itself. The visitor center under consideration today is perfectly in keeping with this role.

The visitor center will serve as a contemplative venue to collect remembrances of the individuals' names that are inscribed on the Wall. Significantly, it will allow visitors to learn the importance of the Memorial, its role in helping to evoke the memory of those who served, and its place in promoting healing among those who fought in Vietnam and between these men and women and the society they once so bravely served. It is for this reasons that the Veterans of Foreign Wars strongly supports the expeditious construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial visitor center on this site in providing a unique and profound historical experience to benefit untold generations to come.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cullinan follows:]

Statement of Dennis M. Cullinan, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the 2.6 million men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and our Ladies Auxiliary, I am pleased to testify here today in support of H.R. 1442, legislation to authorize the design and construction of a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial or The Wall has stood since its dedication in 1982 as a national symbol of the service and sacrifice of those who paid the ultimate price in defending our democratic way of life in Vietnam. More than this, it has come to recognize and to honor the courage and patriotism of all of the veterans of that war as well as all of those who have served this nation in uniform and stood in harm's way to protect our precious liberty. In commemorating these fallen heroes of Vietnam, it tangibly venerates the veterans of all wars past, present, and future.

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This memorial offers young and old alike the opportunity to learn the lessons of the Vietnam War and to develop a deeper awareness and understanding of the true meaning of both sacrifice in service of others and patriotism itself. The Visitor Center under consideration today is perfectly in keeping with this role.

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Thank you. This completes my testimony and I will be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Cullinan. Thank you for being here.

Gentlemen, thank you for your testimony, and ladies. Mr. Scruggs, I want to start with you because I know that you had some panels up there. Can you briefly go through those? They looked to me like conceptual ideas of what it should look like.

Mr. SCRUGGS. If you would allow me—

Mr. RADANOVICH. And a few that it should not look like. Go ahead.

Mr. SCRUGGS. This exhibit, a short walk from here, shows you the, quote-unquote, architectural excellence on the Mall. This is diametrically opposed to what we stand for at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. You will not see anything like this in any of the capitals of the world, yet it sits in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial.

I turn to our next exhibit at this time. This is approximately a 3-minute walk from where you stand. The roof on this, corrugated aluminum roof, or whatever it is, is actually rusting. It is a terrible piece of architecture. The architecture is exceeded only by the lack of quality of the cuisine. If you are hungry in Washington, D.C., do yourself a favor. Don't stop there.

The next photograph, this was taken at 10 a.m. last Friday. It is a Tourmobile stand, sitting there, the Lincoln Memorial, you can see it in the background. And nobody is even using it.

The next we have here, are the vending stands at the Lincoln Memorial, and at this time I will introduce into the record a thoughtfully, carefully written legal opinion by the law firm of Williams and Connolly which represents the Washington Post and other groups and is a First Amendment law firm. This shows how the National Park Service can, on a daily basis, force each of these vendors to move their vending tents and leave. But this is the his-

toric vista of the Lincoln Memorial of the Mall, and this is what we are seeing from the stewards of the Mall. And we find this absolutely quite incredible.

Just one more photograph of what the guardians of the Mall have given us. This stand has been there longer than we had planned for the original visitor center to be part of this. We actually planned a 10-year visitor center. Since then, things have changed. We are going to have an underground visitor center. It is going to be here for a while. But this shows what is there. Just another picture of the men's room there. I do not mean to sound confrontational or negative toward the National Park Service. These are very dedicated civil servants. But when you look at the lack of quality of the structures on our Nation's Mall and when you go to some of the poorest countries in the world, you don't see anything that bad, in Saigon and Hanoi.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Right. Can you give me an idea of the other posters next to them?

Mr. SCRUGGS. Yes. Here is the visitor center. You will see the visitors are walking down, Exhibits A, B, and C. Exhibit A shows you some visitors, and they are looking at the pictures of a helicopter. You know, we are just thinking of that. Exhibit B, they are looking at a map. Remember how important geography is to a well-balanced person. And C, here are the photographs. There will be hundreds and hundreds of them of the men and women who gave their lives. This will give the visitors, youngsters especially, the context to understand the wall itself.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Would you explain that? You have got the site map there, too.

Mr. SCRUGGS. Yes, the site map is extremely important. This is drawn to scale—drawn to scale, I might add, by Bill Lecky, who is here today, one of the most competent architects in Washington, D.C., who designed the Vietnam and Korean Memorials, all the working drawings. He was basically in charge of it. This shows how big these things are.

Now, when we look at Figure 6, you can see this corrugated aluminum building that is next to the Lincoln Memorial, and the visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial sited in red, if you could point to that, what you will see is the visitor center for the Memorial will be approximately one-fifth the size of these corrugated aluminum buildings which stand there.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Is the idea, Mr. Scruggs, to eliminate the need for restrooms by incorporating that into a visitor center as well as food services?

Mr. SCRUGGS. Yes, sir. There will not be food services, but there will be restrooms. The visitor center as well, we have been assured by architects, will be a safe haven in the event of biological, nuclear, or chemical attack.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Scruggs.

I now recognize Mrs. Christensen.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a couple of questions also for Mr. Scruggs, but I want to thank everyone for your testimony. They are a little more technical.

The existing Memorial, has that experienced any water seepage problems given its location below grade? And is that a concern regarding building a structure underground on these grounds?

Mr. SCRUGGS. I appreciate that. That is a very thoughtful question. In order to build the Memorial behind you, we actually had to go down to bedrock. We had hydrologists. We have the best engineering firm in Washington, D.C., who has assured us that with non-permeable concrete, we can build this with no problem.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Has there been seepage problems with the Wall as it exists?

Mr. SCRUGGS. There were problems anticipated, but there have been no seepage problems. There have been some hairline cracks, and we have Parsons Brinkerhoff Engineers periodically review the Memorial.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. And my question actually was sort of answered, and I just got an affirmation on it through the first panel, the fact that the visitor center would be underground. Is that decided on?

Mr. SCRUGGS. Yes, ma'am. It will be approximately 10,000 square feet. It will be underground. It was planned for 7,000 square feet. We have expanded it because of some very thoughtful commentary that perhaps it needed to be a little larger in order to tell a little bit more of the story.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. So an amendment—the bill as written says aboveground or underground. So there wouldn't be any objection to us amending to just specifically state "underground."

Mr. SCRUGGS. We would strongly encourage you to do that, and what you will hear in the testimony which our architect, the finest in Washington, views as quite laughable from Mr. Daniel Smith of the National Park Service is that it is impossible to build the visitor center because the aboveground element will forever destroy the sight lines, these historic sight lines of the Mall, from the same National Park Service who brings us these brown buildings. I am quite surprised to have been informed of this testimony.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. The bill also allows the Commission on Fine Arts 1 year from the date of enactment to review and approve the proposal. So what would happen if the CFA is not given the design proposal until so far down in the year that the year might be up? Wouldn't it be better for us to start the clock running when the proposal is presented to CFA rather than giving them 1 year to review and approve?

Mr. SCRUGGS. I think so. That was primarily placed in there because the Chairman of the National Capital Memorial Commission, who also approves the construction permit, who is here today, Mr. John Parsons, the last time we testified, July 2001, the day of the testimony he referred to the visitor center in the New York Times in an article by Ms. Eileen Scottolino as "an atrocity." So here is a person who is going to be issuing the construction permit who chairs these commissions, who, of course, coincidentally, unanimously vote against this as they approved his \$30 million underground visitor center for the Washington Monument, which we hope does not disturb the structure itself. There was a need to place this in the legislation essentially to keep Mr. Parsons from misusing his authority as a Federal employee.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I am glad you are not antagonistic to the National Park Service.

[Laughter.]

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Just one last question. Under the legislation, once the center is in place, who would determine the content of the information provided by the center? Would that be the responsibility of the National Park Service or the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund or both? And who will staff it, the National Park Service or the VVMF personnel?

Mr. SCRUGGS. We look upon this as pretty much a joint project. We would turn to an exhibit at this time, "Echoes from the Wall." This has been used in high schools throughout the United States. So some of the people who you heard from on this panel will be doing the red, white, and blue patriotic thing and making sure that this helps people understand the war itself.

And, again, we have worked closely with the Park Service for over 20 years. We do it every day. We help the Rangers when they run out of rubbing paper, when the lights go out. I mean, we are here. But I am sorry, for 3 years I have been fighting a person who is very powerful in this town. He has prevailed. And I believe the wisdom of the Congress—when he attempted to stop this Memorial from being placed here on Constitution Gardens in 1980 in testimony, the wisdom of the Congress was that this Memorial should be here and that Mr. Parsons was wrong. And he is even more wrong for the efforts he has made to thwart this visitor center, and we will not allow him to thwart the will of Congress, assuming this bill is passed.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much.
Chairman Pombo?

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to defer my questions at this point. I was just notified that they expect a vote on the floor in about 40 minutes, so I am going to defer my questions at this time, and any questions that I have will be submitted in writing to the panel.

Thank you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Pombo?
Dennis?

Mr. CARDOZA. I just have a couple brief statements.

First of all, I want to thank Chairman Pombo for carrying this piece of legislation. I think this is a very important initiative for our country and for the soldiers who fought there and for the children who will come after, and I salute the Chairman for doing this. And I salute the Chairman for holding this hearing today.

I think it is somewhat appropriate that it is raining like hell here because you have had to fight like hell to make this project into a reality. Nothing has been easy with regard to the war, with regard to building this monument to begin with, nor to get this visitor center built. And I salute you, Mr. Scruggs, and all the panelists who continue the fight.

I would observe that I don't think you will stop until you get it built, and I salute that, too. And so it is appropriate that we have tough weather conditions today because I think it just signifies the tough fight that you have all had to go through.

I just want to thank you, Mr. Scruggs, for your years of dedication. I brought with me the information packet that you gave me when you visited my office the first time, and that you distribute to middle school students and maybe some high school students. The continuing educational efforts that you promote are not just going to be here at the visitor center, but are, in fact, something that you take on the road with visiting walls and memorials that travel the country, with these projects that you take directly to the schools. I just think it is so important that we bring our history to life, and for what you have done, I salute you.

We may have to leave and I may not be able to stay for the next panel, but I also want to mention that I do understand that the National Park Service and, in fact, Mr. Parsons, I think, testified before a congressional Committee in 1980 in opposition to the Wall and now are in opposition to the visitor center because we are protecting the law that they originally opposed. And I just think that this Committee—and I would like to have your opinion of it, Mr. Scruggs—ought to be very forthright in supporting Mr. Pombo's legislation.

Mr. SCRUGGS. We appreciate everything that has gone on today. We understand the importance of this. We understand our responsibility as stewards of the Wall and our responsibility for architectural excellence at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the type of architectural excellence that this Mall needs much more of.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much.

Mr. CARDOZA. I just have one brief question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your indulgence. I realize the time constraints.

There are, as you pointed out, a number of vendors' stations here. Would those vendors be incorporated into the visitor center in some way so that they could be removed from the sight lines where they are currently located?

Mr. SCRUGGS. I would again turn you to the exhibit that shows exactly how their rights as demonstrators can be protected and the National Park Service can basically disrupt their activities by making them move on a nightly basis. But we will not be moving vending areas into the visitor center, and it is very interesting to hear you say vending areas, because they are given permits because they are demonstrators.

Mr. CARDOZA. I see. I misunderstood. I am sorry.

Mr. SCRUGGS. It is quite amazing, isn't it?

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you.

Mr. Gibbons?

Mr. GIBBONS. Very briefly, I wanted to thank all of you for your testimony, and I have just a couple of questions.

Your design has to be approved by the Commission on Fine Arts. That is by law.

Mr. SCRUGGS. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. GIBBONS. Now, with regard to the funding, it is not allowed to have taxpayer funds. It is all donations. Is that correct?

Mr. SCRUGGS. Yes, this will be funded by corporate leaders and others. We are also offering to provide every penny to maintain this visitor center. We don't think our taxpayers should have to pay a penny to maintain a visitor center for America's youth.

Mr. GIBBONS. And one final brief question, Mr. Chairman, if I may. Give us a time line when you expect to be completed. Assuming we are going to get through this bill, assuming we are going to get the design accomplished, what is your expected time line?

Mr. SCRUGGS. We believe we can do it in 3 and a half years.

Mr. GIBBONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Gibbons.

Mrs. Christensen, did you—

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I just wanted to say for the record, because Mr. Parsons has taken quite a bit of hits here today, that his job is really defined by the Commemorative Works Act, and he is a steward of the Mall, and it is not that he—I don't think we can say that he opposed just the Vietnam Memorial, but he has a responsibility to protect and preserve the Mall. And I am sure he is as supportive as anyone else of the memorializing of the events of the war and the people who died. But he is just fulfilling his responsibility under the Commemorative Works Act.

Mr. RADANOVICH. He is not a bad guy.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. No.

Mr. SCRUGGS. No. He doesn't always make the—

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much, Mr. Scruggs and panel. I want to thank you very much for being here, and I appreciate your testimony. Thank you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Next up is Mr. Dan Smith, who is Special Assistant to the Director of the National Park Service, of course, here in Washington, D.C. Mr. Smith, welcome to the Subcommittee.

**STATEMENT OF P. DANIEL SMITH, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO
THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a pleasure to be here today to represent the Department. If I could just take 2 seconds before I begin my official testimony, I am seated before you today as a Vietnam veteran who served in the 4th Infantry Division in the 1969 and 1970. I sit here before you also as a person who was at the Department of Interior when we built this Wall. I was here the day we broke ground on the right-hand side as I face it. I was here and I staffed the dedication that President Reagan did of the Memorial on Veterans Day of 1982.

I have a lot of feelings and they have been brought out in other people's testimonies today, and I am very proud to be sitting here also as a former staff member of your Subcommittee, Mr. Chairman. So a lot of emotions come together today, and Mr. Gibbons hit it mostly. If it was only about 40 degrees warmer, this is a classic day in the highlands in Vietnam that I served under.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of Interior's views on H.R. 1442. We are deeply appreciative of the sacrifices made by the men and women who bravely served our country in Vietnam. Our feelings of gratitude are heightened at this time of year, as we prepare for Memorial Day events in memory of those who lost their lives in that conflict. We share the interest of the congressional sponsors of H.R. 1442 in having the American public, particularly younger generations, better understand and appreciate the extraordinary burden borne by

those who fought for our country during a most difficult, divisive, and painful time in our Nation's history.

The veterans who served our Nation in Vietnam are honored here in the Nation's capital in what many view as one of the most emotionally moving memorials ever created. The National Park Service is privileged to be the steward of that Memorial. In that role, we are well aware of the deeply emotional experience visitors have when they see the Wall. We believe that it is vitally important that nothing detract from the powerful emotion that the Memorial evokes, and it is that emotion that helps keep alive the public's appreciation of those who served in Vietnam. For this reason, as well as others, we give careful and cautious consideration of any proposal to add a new structure to this Memorial.

The Department wants to ensure that a structure on or adjacent to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, as envisioned in H.R. 1442, will not detract from visitors' experience at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the nearby Lincoln Memorial. We believe that there may be other suitable alternatives to the proposed visitor center that should be explored. We would like to work with the Committee to identify alternative ways of fulfilling the goal of this legislation or to work with the Committee to specifically deal with a structure near the site, adjacent to the site, that certainly would be sited properly and would certainly be of a certain size and dimension that would be appropriate to this Memorial.

As you know, several elements have already been added to the original black granite wall that were not part of the original design. With each addition, the Department has been concerned about the risk of diminishing the original work. The proposed addition of a visitor center at this site poses a significant new challenge since it would not just another memorial element but, instead, a relatively large structure adjacent to the Memorial.

A similar view is shared by the two commissions that, by law, review proposals for structures in this monumental core where we are sitting today. Over the past several years, there have been proposals considered by those commissions from 1,200 square feet to 8,000 square feet, and there were problems found with that. Some of that included aboveground designs, which, of course, were perceived as possibly more a problem than something would have been underground.

On February 7th of last year, the Director of the National Park Service did write a letter to Jan Scruggs at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, and she stated that the Park Service is supportive for the concept of an underground facility so long as it was appropriately sized and sited, acceptable visually, and had a minimum of distracting qualities to the visitor experience. The Director committed the National Park Service to consult with the fund, as well as the National Capital Memorial Commission, the Commission of Fine Arts, and the National Capital Planning Communications on the options available to enhance the interpretation of that memorial.

Mr. Chairman, the Department is fully committed to educating the public about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the men and women who served our Nation in Vietnam. In coordination with the Committee, we would like to investigate various alternatives for

fulfilling the goal of this legislation. Several ideas could be to enhance the existing visitor kiosk and the interpretation that is available there for the Memorial, or possibly studying sites that are near the Memorial but not located at the Memorial. We are open to other ideas as well, and obviously we have this piece of legislation in front of us today, and we look forward to working with the Committee as this bill does move forward.

The goal of H.R. 1442 of educating the public about Vietnam is an admirable one and one that the Department has fully supported and will continue to do so. We look forward to working closely with the Committee.

Mr. Chairman, there are several technical amendments that we would like to discuss with the Committee at a later date as this moves forward so that it is a piece of legislation that is a little bit more clear on the roles between the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and the Park Service and that type of things, and we will do that at a later time if you would permit us.

This concludes my statement, and I would be pleased to answer any questions the Committee has.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith follows:]

**Statement of P. Daniel Smith, Special Assistant to the Director,
National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 1442, which would authorize the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to construct a visitor center to provide information to the public on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

We are deeply appreciative of the sacrifices made by the men and women who bravely served our country in Vietnam. Our feelings of gratitude are heightened at this time of year, as we prepare for Memorial Day events in memory of those who lost their lives in that conflict. We share the interest of the congressional sponsors of H.R. 1442 in having the American public, particularly younger generations, better understand and appreciate the extraordinary burden borne by those who fought for our country during a most difficult, divisive, and painful time in our nation's history.

The veterans who served our nation in Vietnam are honored here in the Nation's Capital in what many view as one of the most emotionally moving memorials ever created. We are privileged to be the steward of this memorial. In that role, we are well aware of the deeply emotional experience visitors have when they see the Wall. We believe that it is vitally important that nothing detract from the powerful emotion that the memorial evokes, as it is that emotion that helps keep alive the public's appreciation of those who served in Vietnam. For this reason, as well as others, we give careful and cautious consideration of any proposal to add a new structure to the memorial.

The Department wants to ensure that a structure on or adjacent to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, as envisioned by H.R. 1442, will not detract from visitors' experience at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and the nearby Lincoln Memorial. We believe there may be other more suitable alternatives to the proposed visitor center that should be explored. We would like to work with the committee to identify alternative ways of fulfilling the goal of this legislation.

H.R. 1442 would authorize the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to construct a visitor center to provide information to the public on the memorial. The bill would authorize the center to be located either above ground or underground, on or adjacent to the memorial. It would require the Secretary of the Interior to offer to lease the center to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund for a 20-year term, renewable in 20-year increments. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund would be responsible for maintaining exhibits at the center and would share other maintenance responsibilities with the Department.

H.R. 1442 requires the visitor center to be located in a way that prevents interference with or encroachment on the memorial and protects open space and visual sightlines on the National Mall, and constructed and landscaped in a manner that is consistent with the Memorial and the National Mall. We appreciate that

H.R. 1442 seeks to be sensitive to siting and design concerns that have been raised since similar legislation was first introduced three years ago.

As you know, several elements have already been added to the original black granite wall that were not part of the original design. They include the flagpole and the Three Servicemen statue, the Memorial to Women who Served in Vietnam that was constructed in 1993, and most recently, the In Memory Plaque, to those veterans who died after the war as a direct result of their military service in Vietnam, which was authorized in 2000. With each addition, the Department has been concerned about the risk of diminishing the original work. The proposed addition of a visitor center at the site poses a significant new challenge, since it would not be just another memorial element but, instead, a relatively large structure adjacent to the memorial.

A similar view is shared by the two commissions that, by law, review proposals for structures in the monumental core—the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts—as well as the National Capital Memorial Commission, which advises the Secretary of the Interior and Congress on such proposals. Since the time legislation authorizing construction of a visitor or education center was first introduced, two design concepts have been publicized. One was a 1,200-square-foot above-ground facility that would be sited where the existing 168-square-foot information kiosk currently stands. All three commissions were opposed to that proposal, and the Department testified in opposition to it in testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks in July, 2001.

The other publicized design concept was an 8,000-square-foot underground facility, which would include a substantial above-ground entrance. In a February, 2002 letter to the President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the Director of the National Park Service indicated support for the concept of an underground facility, so long as it was appropriately sized and sited, acceptable visually, and had a minimum of distracting qualities to the visitor experience. The Director committed the National Park Service to consult with the Fund, as well as the National Capital Memorial Commission, the Commission of Fine Arts, and the National Capital Planning Commission on the options available to enhance the interpretation of the memorial.

At the time that the letter was written, we believed that it might be possible to design an underground facility for the memorial that was, in fact, appropriately sized and sited for the memorial. Since that time, however, the National Park Service has consulted with representatives of the three commissions. They have expressed serious concerns that, because of the practical need for a large above-ground entrance, it would be virtually impossible to design an underground facility in close proximity to the memorial that is not intrusive on the visitor experience. In a public meeting in September, 2002, with the National Park Service representative abstaining, the National Capital Memorial Commission—which includes representation from the other two commissions—voted unanimously to oppose construction of an underground visitor center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

In addition, members of the three commissions are concerned about the precedent a facility of this type would set for other memorials. Structures similar to that proposed by H.R. 1442 have been disapproved or precluded at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt, World War II, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorials because they would detract from the visitor experience. These types of structures run counter to the Memorials and Museums Master Plan, which was endorsed by all three commissions after extensive public review. If a visitor center is allowed to be constructed at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, it will make it much more difficult to deny proposals for such facilities at other similar memorials, despite both previous denials of such proposals and the guidelines opposing these structures contained in the approved Master Plan.

The Department is fully committed to educating the public about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the men and women who served our nation in Vietnam. For more than ten years, the Smithsonian has displayed an exhibit of the offerings left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and collected by National Park Service rangers. Other exhibits of offerings collected by the National Park Service have traveled to schools, universities, museums and veterans centers all over the world. In addition, the National Park Service has published a book and CD-ROM on the history of the memorial and runs a website designed to educate children about museum collections, including those associated with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The National Park Service has been involved in a number of news programs and television specials on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the history of our nation's involvement in Vietnam.

In coordination with the committee, we would like to investigate various alternatives for fulfilling the goal of this legislation. Two ideas we would like to explore

are (1) enhancing the existing visitor kiosk and interpretation at the memorial, and (2) studying sites near the Mall where a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial could be located. We are open to other ideas, as well, that the committee, or the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, or others may suggest.

On the first idea we mentioned, we think that it might be possible to modify the information kiosk at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to include computerized touchscreens that visitors could access to find information about the memorial, and individuals who served in Vietnam. The use of computer technology and touchscreens would enable a wide variety of periodically revolving information to be provided to visitors. This type of technology is already in use at the Korean War Veterans Memorial, and is planned for the World War II Memorial. Along with enhancing the visitor kiosk, the National Park Service would want to work with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to develop more extensive visitor outreach and interpretive programs that do not necessitate a new structure.

On the other idea, we would undertake a study to identify sites near the Mall that are feasible for a visitor center specifically for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. We would expect to work closely with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, as well as the committee, in conducting this study.

The goal of H.R. 1442 of educating the public about Vietnam is an admirable one, and one that the Department has fully supported and will continue to do so. We believe that the two possible courses we have suggested could lead to excellent opportunities to educate visitors about the men and women who served our nation in Vietnam, and would do so while preserving the sanctity of the memorial so that it appropriately honors them. And, as I mentioned, we are open to other ideas for pursuing the same goal. We look forward to working closely with the committee to fulfill the spirit of this legislation.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you or other members of the committee may have.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much, Mr. Smith.

Any questions from the panel? Mr. Pombo?

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just very quickly.

Mr. Smith, I have had a number of conversations since this legislation—before and after the legislation was introduced with members of your Department and members of the Administration about where we go from here. And one of the reasons that the legislation was drafted the way it was was to give us the flexibility to work with the Administration to come up with something that would work down here.

Mrs. Christensen talked about the legislation was drafted to say aboveground or belowground, and in a bunch of different areas it gave that flexibility. And I have been assured that the Administration and the Park Service will continue to work with us to further refine that legislation and come up with something that hopefully can support and the Administration can support in the end that this Committee can pass and move through Congress.

Has anything changed from where we were, you know, last week until today in terms of that relationship that I thought we had?

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, I do not believe so. I am aware that you met with the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Thursday a week ago, and certainly the message that came from that Assistant Secretary is the way we would like to proceed with the Committee to coordinate on this legislation.

The CHAIRMAN. I have no desire on my part to ram anything down anyone's throat when it comes to getting this through. Whatever we ultimately come up with, I want it to be something that works. And I am willing to work with you guys to get that done, but this is something I care about. And I would like to move forward with that. So hopefully we can have the kind of discussions

in order to move forward and get that done, because I think this is something that the time has come that we should move forward with that. So I look forward to working with you and the other members of the Administration to get it done.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, thank you, and I know that the Director of the National Park Service wanted me to make sure that I put on the record that she is ready, willing, and able to work with the Committee to refine this legislation and, again, to carry out the responsibilities that the National Park Service has, not only for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial but the entire Mall, and to work this through the process that has worked for all of these memorials and monuments that are here on the Mall. So we pledge to do that, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you.

Mrs. Christensen, you are OK?

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I think I will pass on the questions because I think that most of the concerns that I have can be addressed as the Director works with the Committee to work out some of the areas that I have some concern about.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Gibbons?

Mr. GIBBONS. No questions.

Mr. RADANOVICH. All right. Thank you.

Mr. Smith, thank you for your testimony.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RADANOVICH. And I don't have the exact wording, but I just want people to know that we will accept written testimony for up to 2 weeks after this hearing. If people want to submit that, they are perfectly welcome.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Pombo?

The CHAIRMAN. There will be further questions for this panel and for previous panels that will be submitted in writing. I know that I have further questions. There are other members of the Committee who wanted the opportunity to present questions at this hearing. Those will be submitted in writing. This panel, Mr. Smith, and the previous panels will have the opportunity to answer those questions in writing as well so that they can be included in the hearing record.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Smith, again, thank you. That ends this session of this panel and also ends the Subcommittee hearing. I want to thank everybody for braving the weather and coming out here today to this most beautiful site, even in the dampness.

Thank you very much. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:50 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

